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Que vivan los estudiantes:

Cycles of Contention and the Chilean Student Movement (1906-present)

An Honors Paper for the Latin American Studies Program

By Jonah Gordon Watt

Bowdoin College, 2018

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¡Que vivan los estudiantes,

jardín de las alegrías!

Son aves que no se asustan

de animal ni policía,

y no le asustan las balas

ni el ladrar de la jauría.

Caramba y zamba la cosa,

que viva la astronomía.

Long live the students,

garden of joys!

They are birds who are not afraid

of neither animals nor police,

and they do not fear the bullets

nor the howling pack.

Caramba y zamba la cosa,

long live astronomy

—Violeta Parra, “Me gustan los estudiantes”

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Abbreviations

ACAS	Asamblea de Centros de Alumnos de Santiago
ACES	Asamblea Coordinadora de Estudiantes Secundarios
AES	Asamblea de Estudiantes Secundarios de Santiago
AFP	Administradoras de Fondos de Pensiones
AOAN	Asamblea Obrera de Alimentación Nacional
CAP	Consejo Asesor Presidencial para la Calidad de la Educación
CONES	Coordinadora Nacional de Estudiantes Secundarios
Confech	Confederación de Estudiantes de Chile
CRUCH	Consejo de Rectores de las Universidades Chilenas
FECECh	Federación de Centros de Estudiantes de la Universidad de Chile
FECh	Federación de Estudiantes de la Universidad de Chile
FESES	Federación de Estudiantes Secundarios de Santiago
FEUC	Federación Estudiantil de la Universidad Católica
FOCH	Federación Obrera de Chile
JUNAEB	Junta Nacional de Auxilio Escolar y Becas
LGE	Ley General de Educación
LOCE	Ley Orgánica Constitucional de Enseñanza
OEP	Organizaciones Económicas Populares
PSU	Prueba de Selección Universitaria
PUCV	Pontificia Universidad Católica de Valparaíso
RBP	<i>Revista Bello Público</i>
UP	Unidad Popular
UPLA	Universidad de Playa Ancha

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Introduction

Hundreds of students had congregated outside the Casa Central on the morning of April 11, 2017, when my *micro* arrived at the Universidad de Playa Ancha (UPLA), the public university where I studied for a semester. Peers informed me that classes had been canceled for the *marcha educacional*, a national demonstration protesting a recent education reform proposed by then-President Michelle Bachelet. My classmates invited me to join them behind the department's banner, and together we proceeded down to Plaza Sotamayor, Valparaíso's central square and the starting point for all marches. There, we were joined by hundreds of students from other universities, all carrying their own banners and signs. Once assembled at the plaza, a classmate passed around a sheet for contact information and explained our contingency plan in case authorities moved to break up the demonstration.

The march processed through the city center where truck drivers honked and office workers leaned out of windows, raining down scraps of paper confetti in support. Chanting, singing, and walking to the beat of several large drums, the march was an effervescent mass of student energy. As we marched, we were flanked by police vehicles and *guanacos*, trucks with pressurized water cannons named after the spitting *guanaco*, a relative of the llama. By the time we reached the site of the national congress, police forces blocked the procession. Minutes later, *guanacos* began spraying at students and bystanders. The crowd scattered and I ran up a side street. A normal day for Chilean students.

In the past decade, student protests and subsequent police repression have become commonplace in Chile. Students made headlines worldwide in 2011 with protests such as a flash mob of Michael Jackson's "Thriller," "kiss-ins," and a theatrical mid-winter beach scene in Santiago's Plaza de Armas. These protests, popularly known as the Chilean Winter,

demanded that former (and recently reelected) President Sebastián Piñera's administration eliminate university tuition by renationalizing the copper industry, decreasing military spending, and implementing a major tax reform. At its core, the movement criticized the massive socioeconomic disparities resulting from the neoliberal order established under the dictatorship of General Augusto Pinochet (1973-1990).

But 2011 was not the first time that students took to the streets and redirected the political agenda to address their grievances. Five years earlier, secondary students occupied hundreds of schools across the country. Dubbed the Penguin Revolution after students' black and white uniforms, this wave of mobilizations demanded free bus passes and an end to Pinochet-era legislation that had placed schools under municipal control.

These waves of protest represent the continuation of a long and hallowed tradition of student activism that dates back to 1906, the founding year of Chile's oldest student federation, the Federación de Estudiantes de la Universidad de Chile (FECh). In the early 1920s, students found common cause with a burgeoning anarchist labor movement, and several decades of episodic mobilizations climaxed in 1970 with the election of socialist president, Salvador Allende. Much changed, however, following the military coup d'état on September 11, 1973. Over the next sixteen years of Pinochet's dictatorship, student and popular organizations were disbanded and repressed, and thousands of students, professionals, and laborers were tortured and "disappeared."

Beginning in the mid-1970s, Chile has served as a testing ground for radical neoliberal restructuring pioneered by the "Chicago Boys," a group of Chilean economists trained at the University of Chicago. Neoliberal ideology posited that the free market should regulate the economy with minimal state intervention. This manifested itself in reforms that

privatized the state's industries and social services and created markets for them. Seeking to undo the economic reforms and nationalizations implemented under Allende and begun by his predecessor, Eduardo Frei (1964-1970), Pinochet and the Chicago Boys privatized Chile's principal industries, banking and insurance companies, and social services. Placing control of education, healthcare, and natural resources in the hands of private companies, the dictator's neoliberal agenda produced what is commonly referred to as the "Chilean miracle." While the country's GDP certainly burgeoned under military rule, socioeconomic inequality grew exponentially. According to the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), Chile, the only South American country in the organization, currently has the second highest levels of socioeconomic inequality after Mexico.¹

Education was particularly hard hit by these reforms. Through the process of municipalization, the regime granted municipalities control over secondary schools, thus decreasing the role of the state. Pinochet and the Chicago Boys promoted school choice, suggesting that this would increase competition between municipal and private schools and would thus improve the quality of education. In reality, this only deepened the socioeconomic divide, as only families of means could afford to send their children to private schools. At the university level, government funding was drastically reduced, and a new market of for-profit schools emerged. Education had effectively become a consumer good controlled by the free market.² Of all the countries represented by the OECD, Chile ranks first for educational segregation.³

¹ "Inequality - OECD," accessed May 5, 2018, <http://www.oecd.org/social/inequality.htm>.

² For an extensive overview on the neoliberalization of education see, Joseph Collins and John Lear, *Chile's Free-Market Miracle: A Second Look* (Oakland: Food First, 1995), 125–48.

³ OECD 2011, cited in: Cristian Cabalin, "Neoliberal Education and Student Movements in Chile: Inequalities and Malaise," *Policy Futures in Education* 10, no. 2 (2012).

In 1988, Pinochet called a national plebiscite that would have enabled him to remain in power. The plebiscite backfired, and civilian rule was restored two years later. While the dictatorship was over, Pinochet's 1980 Constitution remained the law of the land, and before he stepped down he named himself senator for life. Furthermore, the binomial electoral system implemented in the Constitution meant that any party that received a third of the vote was granted a representative. This effectively guaranteed the presence of the political right in successive democratic administrations, thus protecting the regime's policies. And while neoliberal restructuring was a hallmark of the dictatorship, to the surprise of many Chileans, successive civilian administrations did not substantively alter those principles. The Penguin Revolution and Chilean Winter thus emerged out of a fragile democracy still beholden to neoliberal policies.

This thesis explores these two mobilizations as both responses to neoliberalism and as a continuation of students' historical antagonism with the state. Through an examination of Chile's history of student activism, I seek to understand how the more recent protests both drew upon and serve as a departure from earlier mobilizations. How have tactics and demands changed during cycles of contention, and how did their innovative tactics initially succeed in capturing the public's imagination, only to lose momentum and support just months later?

I argue that movements are in part the product of interactions with a changing state. By analyzing student mobilizations under dictatorship and democracy, I also seek to understand how the student movement has responded to political openings. What do mobilizations look like under dictatorship versus liberal and conservative democracies? And

how do different state actors respond to students and their demands? When has this relationship been more conciliatory and at which points has it been dangerously antagonistic?

Situating the Chilean student movement within a broader literature of social movement theory, I ask what distinguishes this case. While Latin America has a storied history of strident student activism, Chile stands apart from its neighbors in its scale and character, and it offers a notable counterpoint from student mobilizations in western Europe and the United States.

Finally, this thesis examines the movement's limited victories. Have recent mobilizations been successful? Are students' interpretations of success too self-critical? Although my thesis does not provide definitive answers to all these questions, my research complicates our understanding of what "success" means for social movements.

Literature Review

After a review of the theoretical literature on social movements, I consider scholarship on the student movement and activism more broadly over three distinct time periods: the 1920s to the end of the military dictatorship in 1990; the "return to democracy" through the Penguin Revolution in 2006; and from 2006 until the present.

To contextualize the Chilean student movement within broader social movement theory, I turn to social scientists Charles Tilly's and Sidney Tarrow's understanding of "contentious politics," which occur at the intersection of contention, politics, and collective action. As Tarrow writes, "[c]ollective action becomes contentious when it is used by people who lack regular access to representative institutions, who act in the name of new or

unaccepted claims, and who behave in ways that fundamentally challenge others or authorities.”⁴ His bottom-up understanding explains how students, a normally marginal group of actors, have consistently levied claims and brought about political change.

Tilly and Tarrow utilize a political opportunity structure approach, which posits that contentious politics result from shifting political opportunities. This is a useful framework for the Chilean student movement, since the nation’s history has been characterized by repeated bouts of political polarization. Once these openings arise, actors employ “repertoires of contention” to challenge the political class and bring about change from below. Repertoires must be disruptive and innovative, drawing attention to the movement and confronting the existing order. Tarrow presents a Catch 22, however: “[C]ollective actors who have only disruptive collective action as a resource, by their very actions bring it within the conventional repertoire and thus deprive themselves of its power.”⁵ As we will see, the innovative tactics employed in the 2006 and 2011 mobilizations quickly lost their novelty, as media attention waned and the numbers of protestors declined.

Anthropologist David Graeber’s work on radical direct action focuses on the strategies and tactics employed by contemporary social movements to generate attention. Graeber describes absurd demonstrations, such as anti-globalist anarchists in rubber jumpsuits and gas masks breaking out into spontaneous street parties. His analysis of these unconventional actions helps to make sense of similarly outlandish direct action employed by Chilean students in the past decade. Reflecting on the carnivalesque, festive nature of more

⁴ Sidney G. Tarrow, *Power in Movement: Social Movements and Contentious Politics*, 3rd ed. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011 [1994]), 7.

⁵ Tarrow, *Struggle, Politics, and Reform: Collective Action, Social Movements, and Cycles of Protest* (Ithaca: Center for International Studies, Cornell University, 1989), 5.

recent protests, Graeber writes: “Large actions always tend to be represented as ‘festivals of resistance’ or ‘carnivals against capitalism’; their organizers always explicitly contrast them with the old, tedious style favored by liberals and socialists, which simply involve marching along with signs.”⁶ Such joviality and festive street performance figures prominently into recent mobilizations, providing a stark contrast from traditional movements.

But not all contentious acts evolve into full-fledged social movements. As Tilly and Tarrow explain, a social movement is “a sustained campaign of claim making, using repeated performances that advertise the claim, based on organizations, networks, traditions and solidarities that sustain these activities.”⁷ Throughout its history, the student movement has utilized organizational structures and creative tactics to levy sustained campaigns. The movement’s unity, creativity, and ability to leverage sustained campaigns of claim making ebb and flow, however, resulting in cycles of mobilization followed by a period of dormancy.

Contention is cyclical, Tarrow notes, progressing through three key stages: diffusion; exhaustion; and radicalization or institutionalization.⁸ His understanding of such mobilizations is essential to my analysis of the 2006 and 2011 movements, particularly their demobilization. But this cyclicity also means that movements draw from previous cycles, increasing momentum in a non-linear fashion. As Tarrow relates, “new movements, however radical or flamboyant they seemed at the time, were part of a general cycle of mobilization,” borrowing from the tactics and ideology of preceding mobilizations.⁹ This argument becomes central to my own historicization of the contemporary student movement.

⁶ David Graeber, *Direct Action: An Ethnography* (Edinburgh: AK Press, 2009), 381.

⁷ Charles Tilly and Tarrow, *Contentious Politics*, 2nd Ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015 [2007]), 11.

⁸ Tarrow, *Struggle, Politics, and Reform*, 214.

⁹ Tarrow, 4.

While Tilly and Tarrow's theorizations are fundamental to my understanding of the Chilean movement, their case studies and arguments are taken from North American and European social movements during the 1960s and 1970s. Theory on "new social movements," which emerged in Europe in the 1980s, lends itself better to the study of contemporary Latin American movements. This scholarship explores the transition from traditional, class-based movements to collective identity-based movements in response to neoliberal state restructuring. These movements can mobilize around issues such as race, gender, or human rights.¹⁰ As sociologist and urbanist Diane Davis contends, Tilly and Tarrow's political opportunity structure framework is less popular among contemporary Latin Americanists who perceive it "as being focused on the state and its actions, or at best on the political and social conditions that are likely to make state actors respond (or not) to movement demands," rather than civil society.¹¹ She argues that new social movement theory that focuses on collective identity provides a more useful conceptual framework. My approach utilizes both political opportunity structure and new social movement theory to make sense of how students formed a collective identity and mobilized under shifting political conditions in the age of neoliberalism.

Sociologists Susan Eckstein and Manuel Antonio Garretón observe how social movements have moved away from the "classes" to the "masses," as Chilean laborers lost their jobs and their ability to organize under Pinochet.¹² To fill the vacuum left by unions,

¹⁰ Steven M. Buechler, "New Social Movement Theory," ed. George Ritzer, *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Sociology*, 2015, 1-4, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/9781405165518.wbeosn022.pub2>.

¹¹ For an extensive analysis on the differences between political opportunity structure and new social movement theory and their relevance to Latin American social movements see, Diane E. Davis, "The Power of Distance: Re-Theorizing Social Movements in Latin America," *Theory and Society* 28, no. 4 (1999): 586.

¹² Manuel Antonio Garretón M., "Popular Mobilization and the Military Regime in Chile: The Complexities of the Invisible Transition," in *Power and Popular Protest: Latin American Social Movements*, ed. Susan Eckstein (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 259-277.

neighborhood-based groups became more active during the military regime. This argument is supported by other scholarship that analyzes the emergence of community organizing under the dictatorship in Santiago's shantytowns.¹³

Likewise, Stahler-Sholk, Kuecker, and Vanden's anthology on twenty-first century Latin American social movements offers a useful framework of how social movements have responded to global capitalism. In their introduction, the editors move beyond the social movements in the "transition-to-democracy" model, "which interpreted social movements as a temporary outgrowth of the suppression of conventional politics by bureaucratic-authoritarian regimes," which were prevalent throughout Latin America in the last decades of the twentieth century. Instead, the editors contend that the new social movements not only emerged out of transitions to democracy and a legacy of activism, but rather as "a specific response to the advance of neoliberal globalization."¹⁴ These arguments holds especially true in the Chilean case. As I will illustrate, the transition to democracy actually stifled, rather than encouraged, the emergence of social movements; mobilizations would not emerge in response to neoliberalism until fifteen years after the transition to democratic rule.

These editors also acknowledge the difficulty of maintaining solidarity across popular sectors in a neoliberal society that seeks to divide and suppress collectivity. As they argue, the success of these new movements "depends on whether they build community and collective consciousness so that the perceived commonalities of interest are transformed into durable alliances."¹⁵ Connections between students and the popular classes, I contend, have

¹³ Cathy Lisa Schneider, *Shantytown Protest in Pinochet's Chile* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1995).

¹⁴ Richard Stahler-Sholk, Glen David Kuecker, and Harry E. Vanden, eds., *Latin American Social Movements in the Twenty-First Century: Resistance, Power, and Democracy* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2008), 2.

¹⁵ Stahler-Sholk, Kuecker, and Vanden, 8.

been one of the deciding factors of a movement's success but have also been difficult to maintain.

Even as these authors transcend traditional understandings of labor-led social movements, the role of students is largely absent in their case studies. While students still represent a relatively elite part of civil society, the massification of Chilean higher education has expanded university access and in turn has brought the student movement closer to the popular classes. This research attempts to fill this gap in conjunction with other scholarship that focuses specifically on student protest in Chile.

1920s-1990 Scholarship

Sociologists Frank Bonilla and Myron Glazer's history of the FECh from 1918-1957 provided the first overview of the country's principal student organization. Through historical analysis of FECh documentation and interviews with student leaders, the authors explore how the student organization related to political parties, labor unions, the state, and university administration.¹⁶ More recent work from social historians Julio Pinto Vallejos and Gabriel Salazar presents a comprehensive history of Chilean youth, dating back to the nineteenth century.¹⁷ Historian Fabio Moraga Valle also provides a similarly comprehensive history focusing on the first three decades of the movement.¹⁸ While these histories all

¹⁶ Frank Bonilla and Myron Glazer, *Student Politics in Chile* (New York: Basic Books, 1970). For more recent scholarly analyses of the FECh see, Eduardo Valenzuela and José Weinstein, *La FECH de los años veinte, Un movimiento estudiantil con historia* (Santiago: José Manuel Infante, 1982 [1980]); and Garretón and Javier Martínez, *El movimiento estudiantil: Conceptos e historia* (Santiago: Ediciones Sur, 1985).

¹⁷ Julio Pinto Vallejos and Gabriel Salazar, *Niñez y juventud: Construcción cultural de actores emergentes*, in *Historia contemporánea de Chile*, eds., Salazar and Pinto, (Santiago: LOM Ed, 2002) Vol. 5.

¹⁸ Fabio Moraga Valle, *Muchachos casi silvestres: La Federación de Estudiantes y el movimiento estudiantil chileno, 1906-1936* (Santiago: Ediciones de la Universidad de Chile, 2007).

examine different periods, they use similar approaches, focusing on specific leaders and organizations. Furthermore, by focusing on discrete time periods, these scholars neglect broader historical analysis.

Interestingly, there is only limited scholarship on the students' role in Allende's era. Most scholarship on this decade focuses instead on university reform. Several scholars have observed protest from the right against Allende, though their accounts contain little mention of student participation in these protests.¹⁹ Nevertheless, this scholarship provides an interesting counterpoint and illuminates how the middle class, and women in particular, became politicized and took to the streets in protest.

Scholarship on student mobilizations after the 1973 coup examines the shift away from labor organizing to more popular-based protests as labor was repressed and the middle class negotiated with and acquiesced to the junta. In particular, Garretón notes the emergence of "women, youth, and social, cultural, and religious groups" which responded to immediate needs and human rights abuses during the dictatorship.²⁰ Other research focuses specifically on the role that women played in resistance under the dictatorship.²¹

Political scientist Cathy Schneider's ethnography explores the prominence of new political actors in neighborhood-based organizations in Santiago's shantytowns. These grassroots forms of organizing were not new to the dictatorship, she argues, but "lay in the political heritage of decades of work in the popular culture and in the formation of a skilled

¹⁹ Margaret Power, *Right-Wing Women in Chile: Feminine Power and the Struggle against Allende, 1964-1973* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2002).

²⁰ Garretón, "Popular Mobilization and the Military Regime in Chile," 273.

²¹ Carrie Endries, "'Si la mujer no está, la democracia no va': Chilean Women's Resistance to the Military Dictatorship (1973-1989)," (Senior Honors Thesis, Bowdoin College, 1997).

generation of grassroots militants.”²² She argues that in the 1980s, the Communist Party’s emphasis on the structural nature of the *pobladores*’ problems fomented a community solidarity “capable of defeating even the most powerful regime.”²³ Her argument, if romanticized, highlights the alliances that politicized these *poblaciones*.

In the past few years, cultural historians have provided new approaches to student activism throughout the twentieth century. This historical approach explores how students, and youth more broadly, created new spaces for dissent and political expression within Santiago’s urban landscape. Raymond Craib examines the bohemian, anarchist roots of the student movement that emerged from close ties between the FECh and anarchist laborers in the first decades of the century. He also focuses on the state’s repressive response to this budding alliance.²⁴ Camilo Trumper illustrates how ephemeral urban protest and public art, a distinctive characteristic of Allende’s Chile, became “one of the first targets of repression by the military regime that deposed him.”²⁵ Interestingly, street art and urban protest would reappear after the return to democracy. Trumper also analyzes public protest from the right under Allende in the form of *cacerolazos* (“banging of the pots”) and truckers’ strikes, arguing that it was not only leftist workers who utilized public space as a form of resistance. Curiously, *cacerolazos* later became a tactic employed by communities opposed to Pinochet, and have since played a central role in public protest led by neighborhood organizations and women in particular.

²² Schneider, *Shantytown Protest in Pinochet’s Chile*, 9.

²³ Schneider, 11.

²⁴ Raymond B. Craib, *The Cry of the Renegade: Politics and Poetry in Interwar Chile* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016).

²⁵ Camilo D. Trumper, *Ephemeral Histories: Public Art, Politics, and the Struggle for the Streets in Chile* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2016), 2.

By linking public artistic expression to political transitions, Trumper builds upon political scientist Lyman Chaffee's understanding of the role of art under dictatorship. Chaffee argues that street art provides a voice and political platform for those silenced under dictatorial regimes.²⁶ Written before the explosion of the World Wide Web, however, Chaffee's analysis fails to take into account the proliferation of social media platforms. Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Fotolog, a photo-sharing website, have revolutionized how students communicate and diffuse their messaging. While more traditional forms of communication, such as posters, are still ubiquitous on Chile's streets, social media has enabled protestors to instantaneously share content with a much wider public and to organize more effectively. Of particular interest to my thesis is the ways in which digital forms of protest art coexist with more traditional forms of public art and communication.

Transition to Democracy, Penguin Revolution, and Chilean Winter Scholarship

Rich scholarship exists on the "return to democracy" and the lingering effects of Pinochet's neoliberal restructuring, especially in the fields of history and political science. However, there is limited scholarship on the student movement or social mobilizations more broadly, and this period is commonly treated as a lull in activism. Ample scholarship has interrogated why the transition to democracy muted civil society activism, and more recently, several authors have drawn attention to modest pockets of student activism during this period.

²⁶ Lyman G. Chaffee, *Political Protest and Street Art: Popular Tools for Democratization in Hispanic Countries* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1993), 4.

Political scientist Philip Oxhorn has argued that the transition to democracy demobilized popular activism as activists refocused their attention on the electoral campaign.²⁷ Anthropologist Julia Paley also contends that the conciliatory nature of the negotiated transition limited popular mobilizations. The threat of a coup loomed large in the popular imagination during the first years of civilian rule and the Concertación administrations understandably were wary of popular unrest. As the neoliberal order gutted social services, community organizations, especially those focused on public health, sought to fill this void. Paley argues that this organizing represented a new form of political engagement. Turning away from electoral politics, these community organizations focused instead “on the influence ordinary people and organized community groups could bring to bear on the decisions that affected their lives.”²⁸ This important reconceptualization of the meaning of politics is a common thread in recent mobilizations.

This scholarship fails to track the changing nature of the student movement during the transition to democracy, however. Historian Thielemann Hernández moves beyond these analyses of demobilization, challenging the commonly held belief that the movement had disappeared. If the first decade of Concertación rule was marked by a relative silence, he argues that there were still incipient mobilizations. By the turn of the millennium, a new student movement had emerged, led by the radical autonomous left. This movement embraced horizontalism and distanced itself from the traditional political elite.²⁹ But as

²⁷ Philip Oxhorn, “Where Did All the Protesters Go?: Popular Mobilization and the Transition to Democracy in Chile,” *Latin American Perspectives* 21, no. 3 (1994): 49–68.

²⁸ Julia Paley, *Marketing Democracy: Power and Social Movements in Post-Dictatorship Chile* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), 4.

²⁹ Luis Thielemann Hernández, *La anomalía social de la transición: Movimiento estudiantil e izquierda universitaria en el Chile de los noventa (1987-2000)* (Santiago: Tiempo Robado Editoras, 2016), 42–43.

Theielemann Hernández notes, even as students led substantial protests, suggesting a reawakening of civil society, it nonetheless never could sustain its momentum.

Scholarship on the Penguin Revolution examines the high school students and organizations that led the protests, its causes, and the dynamics of the protests themselves. Political scientist Sofía Donoso and journalists Andrea Domedel and Macarena Peña y Lillo provide extensive chronicles of the mobilization. While Domedel and Peña y Lillo include excellent interviews with leaders and provide useful details on the protests, their analyses are limited.³⁰ Donoso's article provides greater analysis, exploring the emergence of the movement and how students mobilized under Bachelet. Donoso breaks down the false dichotomy between "old" and "new" movements, asserting that the Penguin Revolution both mobilized around a collective identity *and* presented material demands, providing a balance between the political opportunity structure approach and new social movement theory.³¹ Finally, political scientist Peter Cummings argues for a generational explanation for the emergence of the movement. He also expands upon the political opening framework, asserting that it was actor agency that enabled students to respond to Bachelet's promises for participation.³²

Secondary scholarship on the 2011 Chilean Winter is rather limited, both in volume and scope. Existing literature focuses primarily on the protests and chronology of the movement, seeking to explain why it erupted with such magnitude. Francisco Figueroa, who

³⁰ Andrea Domedel and Macarena Peña y Lillo, *El mayo de los pingüinos* (Santiago: Ediciones Radio Universidad de Chile, 2008).

³¹ Sofía Donoso, "Dynamics of Change in Chile: Explaining the Emergence of the 2006 Pingüino Movement," *Journal of Latin American Studies* 45, no. 1 (February 2013): 4.

³² Peter M. M. Cummings, "Democracy and Student Discontent: Chilean Student Protest in the Post-Pinochet Era," *Journal of Politics in Latin America* 7, no. 3 (December 14, 2015): 49–84.

served as Vice President of the FECh in 2011, provides an excellent, if rose-tinted, first-hand account of the mobilization. His narrative is instructive and reveals biases and internal tensions within the movement; Figueroa, a member of the Izquierda Autónoma, a university-based political movement, lost the FECh presidency to the communist Camila Vallejo by a narrow margin. Interestingly, Vallejo, who is often regarded as the protagonist of this movement, is barely mentioned in Figueroa's book, perhaps reflecting the ever-present factionalism of the Chilean left.

In my analysis of the innovative tactics that came to define the Chilean Winter, I rely especially on the research of Alicia del Campo, who focuses on the intersection of politics, memory, and theater. Del Campo argues that through the occupation of space, both literal school occupations and protests and street theater, students re-appropriated the public sphere, transforming the streets from individualized, "neoliberal" spaces into public spaces of collective protest.³³ Her scholarship also provides a Chile-specific complement to Graeber's analyses of direct action and new social movements.

While there is a growing body of scholarship on the 2011 movement, primarily in the forms of articles and dissertations, there are few studies that take holistic, historicized approaches to this movement. Through my research and analysis, I contribute to this scholarship by uniting the different lenses of analysis in the secondary scholarship that focus on the tactics, messages, and historical precedents. My historical approach to the more recent movements allows me to take a step back and view larger trends across Chile's long history of activism.

³³ Alicia del Campo, "Theatricalities of Dissent: Human Rights, Memory, and the Student Movement in Chile," *Radical History Review* 2016, no. 124 (January 2016): 177–91.

Primary Sources

To complement the secondary scholarship, this thesis relies upon a wealth of primary sources. These sources provide an array of first-hand accounts and opinions on the recent waves of mobilizations, but they also contain strong biases. Although they may express a progressive perspective, these sources nonetheless offer critical insight into the perceptions of the students, their allies, and the state during the mobilizations.

For press coverage, I primarily consulted *El Mercurio*, Chile's oldest newspaper. Known for its conservative slant, *El Mercurio* provides often heavy-handed critiques of student protests, emphasizing violent acts by the students and downplaying turnout and the impact of demonstrations. Though not indicative of public sentiment, *El Mercurio* perhaps serves as an accurate barometer of elite opinion.

At the Archive of the FECh (AFECh) I consulted magazines and posters created by the Confederación de Estudiantes de Chile (Confech), the national organizing body of student federations. Articles and photographs in *Revista Bello Público* (RBP), the student-run publication of the Universidad de Chile, provide excellent, though understandably self-serving, student perspectives. Editorials and columns written by FECh presidents likewise offer a useful counterpoint to mainstream media coverage. Posters from marches and demonstrations in the past decade are valuable sources for understanding how the movement sought to represent itself to the broader public. For a relatively small archive, the AFECh possesses a prodigious collection of materials, though there are some gaps in its coverage.

Additionally, I use photography and videos from public platforms such as Fotolog, Facebook, and YouTube to complement other textual primary sources. Videos and photographs are especially useful for the 2011 protests, which were characterized by their innovative tactics and theatricality. These sources lend themselves to unique spatial and visual analysis that articles and interviews are unable to provide.

Finally, I conducted twelve interviews with fifteen current or former students found through personal contacts and social media networks. Utilizing a semi-structured questionnaire, I elicited opinions and experiences that illustrate the movement's heterogeneity. Those interviewed represent a small age range and only three universities (Universidad de Chile, Pontificia Universidad Católica de Valparaíso, and UPLA), far from a representative sample of the movement. Interviews were conducted in Santiago and Valparaíso in August, 2017 and January, 2018 and ranged from half an hour to an hour and a half. While some informants held leadership roles in the FECh, others are active in feminist university organizations or are merely politically involved students. Since all students are active in the movement and identify with the political left, these interviews are understandably biased, but provide a unique perspective on the trajectory, accomplishments, and shortcomings of the movement.

Argument

While much scholarship regards the 2006 and 2011 mobilizations as new phenomena, I argue that these mobilizations are the continuation of a constant, if cyclical, legacy of more than a century of student activism. With that said, the more recent waves of protest arose in

an entirely different political, social, and economic context. Born into the neoliberal remnants of Pinochet's dictatorship, these students inherited a unique set of political and economic challenges. Unlike their parents' generations, they did not grow up with the same fear of repression, but rather with the expectation of democratic participation. Mobilizing against the lingering effects of Pinochet's neoliberal reforms, the current movement also emerged in conjunction with coterminous social movements, particularly indigenous and environmental protests.

Coming to terms with the relative successes of the movement is a thorny topic. On the face of it, the students secured only modest concessions from the Bachelet and Piñera administrations. But their ability to alter public opinion about the need for educational reform, their success in galvanizing massive popular support for their political agenda, and their impressive ability to keep the political pressure on successive administrations, despite significant repression, should be counted as significant victories. Additionally, students' capacity to galvanize the popular classes in the past decade reflects the movement's success. Joining forces with labor unions, environmental and indigenous movements, and more recently, the feminist movement, students have forged solidarity networks, at some points stronger than others. Ironically, the movement's heterogeneity has also been its Achilles heel. Political diversity has simultaneously served to broaden the movement's focus while also contributing to its demobilization.

I argue that these incomplete victories and periods of decay are part of broader cycles of contention. Despite its episodic character, the movement has historically demonstrated its ability to provoke responses from both extremes of the political spectrum, sometimes resulting in concessions, while at other times, in brutal repression. While the movement has

been more successful at certain points in history than others, students have consistently served as the nation's moral compass, illuminating socioeconomic inequalities and demanding political reform. Acting on behalf of their families and the interests of the popular classes more broadly, students have pushed the state for socioeconomic reform, often bearing the brunt of the state's response. This carrot and stick approach has come to characterize the contentious relationship between students and the state over the past century.

Chapter One opens with the founding of the FECh in 1906 following students' first act of public rebellion. In this chapter, I trace the evolution of the FECh and the student movement more broadly from its early roots to a heightened phase of collaboration with anarcho-syndicalists in the 1920s, followed by a period of intense state repression and inevitable decay. Students would then rise up again and contribute to the expulsion of the dictator Carlos Ibáñez (1927-1931). Next, I examine the university reforms of the 1960s which contributed to Allende's electoral victory. In this period, I pay attention to how middle class women redefined political participation in the public sphere leading up to the military coup in 1973. I conclude with an examination of student and union-led protests in 1983 that led to Pinochet's defeat in 1989.

Chapter Two examines the re-composition of the student movement from the return to democracy through the eruption of the Penguin Revolution in 2006. I argue that although this decade was punctuated by modest, if brief, mobilizations, the plebiscite effectively drained the movement of its energy. Furthermore, the Concertación government took conscious steps to limit popular organizing in its early years in order to protect its fragile democracy from the threat of another coup. By the mid-2000s, however, a new generation born into democracy would mobilize without the fear of repression that had inhibited their parents. Moreover,

after fifteen years of Concertación hegemony, Bachelet's promises of greater participation raised expectations, providing frustrated students an opportunity to once again demand change. Through marches, strikes, and *tomas* (school occupations), secondary students captured the media and public's attention, forcing educational reform onto Bachelet's agenda. While the Penguin Revolution achieved some of its demands, it did little to dismantle Pinochet's neoliberal education system. By the end of the academic year, exhaustion and factionalism within the student leadership effectively brought about the demobilization of the Penguin Revolution.

Chapter Three focuses on the Chilean Winter in 2011—the largest wave of protests to date. I begin by examining indigenous and environmental protests that broke out in the south, arguing that these manifestations of discontent and demands for greater public transparency provided the necessary preconditions for the reemergence of the student movement. Mobilizing against the right-wing government of Piñera, students demanded free, quality education. In response, they were met with brutal state repression, on an order of magnitude unseen since the dictatorship. What distinguishes the Chilean Winter, I contend, were its innovative tactics and use of public space that enabled the movement to reach a broader public. Like the Penguin Revolution, students did not achieve their main demands, and the movement once again demobilized by the end of the year. But as I argue, students brought education reform back into the spotlight, decidedly shifted public opinion against Piñera, and began to dismantle key pillars of Pinochet's neoliberal legacy.

This thesis concludes with an examination of the movement's progress since the Chilean Winter. Drawn largely from interviews, I suggest that while the movement has not returned with the same vigor, its ability to reach out to the popular classes and connect with

other social movements augers well for the future. I conclude with an analysis of Chile's most recent election, which, on the one hand, saw the surprising emergence of a new leftist coalition, but, nevertheless, ended in Piñera's reelection.

As Tilly and Tarrow argue, social movements form at the nexus of contention, collective action, and politics. I now turn to the first moment of contentious collective action against the state that sparked the emergence of the student movement.

Chapter I

Radical Roots

¡Que la Federación de Estudiantes sea el sagrado abrazo que nos una; y así, respetados y potentes, marchamos dejada a nuestro paso una estela brillante de gloria y de admiración!³⁴

José Ducci, 1906

On August 7, 1906, medical student José Ducci proclaimed these words to a crowd assembled outside of the Universidad de Chile. The previous evening, jeers rang out from the balconies of Santiago's Teatro Municipal during a ceremony honoring students' efforts to stem an influenza outbreak in Valparaíso a year earlier. Students and their families were not informed of the ceremony until the morning of, and they were relegated to the upper galleries while officials and families of the elite assumed the seats of honor below. Snubbed by the ceremony that was intended to honor them, the indignant students erupted in protest and refused to accept the awards. They gathered in the plaza outside the theater, and law and mathematics students decided to go on strike in protest. Shortly thereafter, the protestors formed Chile's first student organization, the FECh. Ducci assumed the presidency and a movement was born.³⁵

This initial rebellious, anti-oligarchic protest would characterize the FECh throughout its early history. Throughout this entire era, the student movement maintained near-constant opposition to the political class. Only during the leftist coalition of the Frente Popular (1936-1941) and Allende's short-lived Unidad Popular (UP) administrations (1970-1973) did

³⁴ *El Mercurio*, August 8, 1906.

³⁵ Moraga Valle, *Muchachos casi silvestres*, 80–81; and Bonilla and Glazer, *Student Politics in Chile*, 31.

students align with the government, though even then students continued to criticize the political establishment.

Though the FECh has served as the backbone of the student movement since 1906, other student federations, notably Santiago and Valparaíso's Federación de Estudiantes de la Universidad Católica (FEUC), also played significant roles in the movement's early history. These other federations challenged the FECh's hegemony, and in the case of the FEUC, challenged the predominantly leftist identity of the student movement. Together, these multiple organizations make up what I refer to as the student movement.³⁶

The movement never embodied one set of political beliefs, but rather reflected the heterogeneity of its students. While the movement has for the most part consistently maintained a leftist identity, Chilean students, like their peers elsewhere throughout Latin America, are ideologically and socioeconomically diverse. In addition, the composition of the movement and its leadership has changed over the past century as higher education has become more accessible, though a university degree is still beyond the reach of many.

Chilean students were not the only ones mobilizing throughout the first half of the twentieth century; neighboring countries also witnessed vibrant student movements, regularly coming into contact with Chilean students through regional congresses. What distinguishes the Chilean movement from its regional counterparts is its historically close ties to the working class and unions. Although student-working class alliances have ebbed and flowed over time, students have periodically aligned with unions and fought for material improvements in the lives of the popular and working classes. At times, the labor movement spearheaded political mobilizations, while at other points the students were in the vanguard.

³⁶ Additionally, the prominent role of student organizations in Concepción and Valparaíso challenged the geographically centralized nature of the student movement.

Through this alliance, the student movement broadened its focus beyond the confines of the campus and fought for larger political changes.

This chapter provides an assessment of the student movement from its founding in 1906 until the end of the dictatorship in 1990. After analyzing its early bohemian roots and the anarchist ideology that emerged after the First World War, I track the evolution of more Marxist tendencies during Carlos Ibáñez del Campo's dictatorship (1927-1931) and the Frente Popular era (1936-1941). Throughout this early period, I pay particular attention to the radicalizing influence that working class organizations had on students. Next, I turn to the university reform and mobilizations during the 1960s that contributed to the victory of Allende's UP coalition in 1970. It is no small irony that during this brief moment of leftist governance a significant number of middle and upper-class families took to the streets to protest Allende's socialist reforms. I explore how these mobilizations transformed public space and brought families, and women in particular, out of the private sphere, a trend that would continue during the Pinochet period as popular classes vied for control of the streets. Methods of protest necessarily changed during the dictatorship, however, as organizations were forced to operate clandestinely until mass mobilizations reemerged in 1983. Owing to Pinochet's fierce repression of unions and the labor movement, students and the popular classes assumed key leadership roles in the resistance, eventually contributing to the return of democracy in 1990.

Emergence of the Movement

Although founded in 1906, the FECh did not truly develop into a progressive mass movement until after World War I. In its initial years, student leadership aligned with the

University's administration and Rector Valentín Letelier, who served from 1906 until 1913. This period was not characterized by antagonism with university authorities and the state. Instead, the movement was primarily focused on the sponsoring of cultural improvement events, such as lectures, discussions, and readings groups. In its first decade, the FECh was composed of a bohemian, largely middle-class student body, led by students from the medical school.

From its inception, the FECh defined itself as anti-oligarchic and anti-clerical. But as sociologists Eduardo Valenzuela and José Weinstein argue: “Detrás del movimiento no existía programa, sino ante todo la afirmación irreverente y temperamental de una juventud renovadora y progresista.”³⁷ While this youthful movement may have lacked a coherent vision and political ideology, it made clear its disapproval of traditional, elitist politics. As the student movement grew closer to more radical elements of the working class in the 1920s, this disapproval with Chile's political class became more apparent.

In the 1910s, medical students living in Santiago's central *barrios* came in close contact with their working class neighbors. These daily “interactions with Santiago's urban poor and working classes, who had little access to adequate health care and treatment, who went hungry, and who lacked housing, dramatically shaped their political perspectives, as did the glaring inequalities of the city,”³⁸ Craib argues. Gradually, students established informal political and cultural alliances with unions and artisans, in turn adopting a bohemian, anarchist political identity and disavowing their earlier belief in liberalism.

³⁷ Valenzuela and Weinstein, *La FECH de los años veinte, un movimiento estudiantil con historia*, 8.

³⁸ Craib, *The Cry of the Renegade*, 62.

As a result, the FECh's early leaders began to address social and political issues beyond the university. In particular, students believed that workers deserved access to education. The FECh established popular schools that provided evening classes for workers, the most famous being the Universidad Popular Lastarria, established in 1910.³⁹ For many middle-class university students, this alliance helped assuage pangs of class privilege: "Coming largely from modest middle-class families, they felt themselves to be partially victims of a system that condemned the mass of their fellows to grinding poverty."⁴⁰ However, Bonilla and Glazer argue that this new partnership with union leaders was not a paternalistic, top-down relationship and that it was in fact the workers, not the students, who drove this initiative.⁴¹

If this early bohemian identity demonstrated concern for the working class, it remained a largely apolitical movement "que se estructuró basado en la alegría juvenil y en cierto ambiente de cofradía en la que se revivía una fraternidad,"⁴² according to Moraga Valle. But the student movement's bohemian student base became increasingly politicized and refocused on issues of the popular classes.⁴³ Influenced by a growing wave of leftist ideology following the Russian Revolution and emboldened by the election of progressives like Santiago Labarca and Juan Gandulfo as president and vice president of the FECh, respectively, the movement radicalized in 1918.⁴⁴ Students strengthened alliances with the

³⁹ For more on popular education see, Garretón, "Popular Mobilization and the Military Regime in Chile," 65; and Bonilla and Glazer, *Student Politics in Chile*, 32–43.

⁴⁰ Bonilla and Glazer, *Student Politics in Chile*, 33.

⁴¹ Bonilla and Glazer, 57.

⁴² Moraga Valle, *Muchachos casi silvestres*, 165.

⁴³ Valenzuela and Weinstein, *La FECH de los años veinte, un movimiento estudiantil con historia*, 25.

⁴⁴ This shift between the bohemian 1910s and the more radical 1920s is evidenced by the differences between the FECh's 1918 statement of aims, which was still focused primarily on concrete educational goals, and its 1920 "Declaration of Principles," which instead embraced loftier, ideological goals. For more on these documents see, Bonilla and Glazer, *Student Politics in Chile*, 45–47.

working class and “expanded what it meant to be a student, what the role of the FECh could and should be, the idea of who could engage in politics, and the very meaning of politics itself.”⁴⁵ Labor organizations held meetings at the FECh center, fostering linkages between students and workers and transforming the physical space of the center.

That partnership was confirmed in 1917 when the Federación Obrera de Chile (FOCh) and the FECh jointly established the Asamblea Obrera de Alimentación Nacional (AOAN). On November 22, 1918, the AOAN organized a hunger march to address food scarcity and economic disparity more generally (See Figure 1:1).⁴⁶ The FECh leadership also began working with the Industrial Workers of the World (also known as the Wobblies), participating in direct actions and eschewing participation in democratic government.⁴⁷ The



Figure 1:1
March organized by the AOAN on November 22, 1918. Courtesy of Memoria Chilena, <http://www.memoriachilena.cl/602/w3-article-98694.html>

⁴⁵ Craib, *The Cry of the Renegade*, 71.

⁴⁶ Craib, 19–20.

⁴⁷ Bonilla and Glazer, *Student Politics in Chile*, 56.

Wobblies were anarcho-syndicalist labor leaders born out of organizing efforts of Valparaíso's port workers in the 1910s. Through nonviolent direct action such as "boycotts, forms of sabotage, the general strike, and 'labeling,' primarily for the purposes of fomenting autonomy, mutual aid, and worker control,"⁴⁸ the Wobblies fought for greater rights for the working class. The Wobblies' anti-statist, anti-clerical ideology galvanized the student movement during the late 1910s and early 1920s.

Boisterous street protest became commonplace in working class neighborhoods during the early 1920s. Within this defined urban space, students and the working class began to take control of the streets and public spaces through marches and demonstrations as well as neighborhood festivals. However, these mobilizations were not well planned and lacked a strategic vision, privileging a propagandistic antagonism over a clear message. Student demonstrations often assumed a mischievous tone, taking the form of practical joking, "mocking authority and tradition."⁴⁹ Like the initial protest that sparked the movement, these inchoate mobilizations featured biting, anti-oligarchical critiques even as they were more playful in tone.

As the urban masses became emboldened, municipal authorities came to realize that their traditional prerogatives were under threat. As Craib relates, "[i]t was not necessarily disorder that [the elite] feared, but a change in the order of things—or, even worse, a new order.... Nominally public spaces that had long been the purview of the city's elite—central parks and plazas, for example—appeared increasingly available to nonelites."⁵⁰ This democratization of space became a defining factor of the student-worker alliance.

⁴⁸ Craib, *The Cry of the Renegade*, 102.

⁴⁹ Craib, 61.

⁵⁰ Craib, 90–91.

Across the Andes in 1918, a university reform movement originating in Córdoba, Argentina, ignited a wave of student activism throughout Latin America. While scholarship on the university reform movement emphasizes its contagious impact throughout the hemisphere, scholars of Chilean history argue that the impacts were not felt as strongly in their country. Indeed, Chile's educational system had already advanced well beyond the point to which its Argentine compatriots aspired. For instance, Chile's public universities were already more secular and accessible to the middle class. Historiographical emphasis on the Córdoba Reform movement also minimizes earlier transnational contacts and influence; well before 1918, students were attending congresses in Uruguay, Peru, and Argentina.⁵¹

A key difference that highlights Chile's exceptionalism is that the Córdoba Reform was focused on internal issues specific to students. As Moraga Valle relates, Argentine students' close alliances with the political class and university administration enabled them to push for university reform. Chilean students, without such political alliances, had to agitate for change elsewhere, instead focusing on issues beyond the university. Furthermore, "el movimiento estudiantil chileno había nacido con una fuerte impronta social que lo llevó a volcarse tanto hacia 'afuera'... como hacia 'adentro' (la protección de sus asociados). La reforma Cordobesa y las distintas modalidades que asumió en la Argentina, demuestran que fue exclusivamente un fenómeno intra universitario."⁵² A delegate sent to Argentina in 1918 echoed this difference between internal and external efforts: "[P]ara ejercer influencia en el mejoramiento intelectual del país y acelerar la evolución del porvenir es necesario que esté vinculado al pueblo donde está la fuerza virginal de nuestra raza de virtudes tan sólidas y

⁵¹ For more on the Reform and a critique of historiography see, Moraga Valle, *Muchachos casi silvestres*; Craib, *The Cry of the Renegade*, 57–62; and Garretón and Martínez, *El movimiento estudiantil*, 68–71.

⁵² Moraga Valle, *Muchachos casi silvestres*, 214.

austeras.”⁵³ As these regional differences illustrate, the Chilean movement was not focused solely on the university itself. Instead, the movement extended beyond the classroom, seeking broader political change.

The nationalist emphasis of the Córdoba Reform also failed to resonate with the Chilean movement, which, owing to its anarchist orientation, had adopted an internationalist focus.⁵⁴ By 1918, the country was significantly impacted by global forces, primarily the first World War, the spread of socialism, and border disputes with Peru. After World War I and the development of synthetic nitrate, Chile’s economy, which had previously been dependent upon its northern nitrate industry, lay in ruins. Moreover, the Russian Revolution captured the imagination of students and further radicalized the labor movement. These global forces helped to mobilize the labor movement and their student supporters.⁵⁵

Tensions between the FECh and the government reached a breaking point in 1920. In an escalating territorial dispute with Peru, President Juan Luis Sanfuentes Andonaegui (1915-1920) deployed troops to the Bolivian-Peruvian border. FECh students, holding true to their pacifist character and acting out of solidarity with Peruvian and Bolivian students, publicly opposed the regime’s jingoistic propaganda. Their opposition to the government’s belligerent stance against its neighbors provoked a nationalistic backlash, resulting in the sacking and burning of the FECh center. This violence, in conjunction with the death of the jailed

⁵³ Jorge Schneider E., “Viaje de los delegados chilenos a Buenos Aires,” *Juventud* 2 (Santiago: 1920), quoted in Moraga Valle, 210.

⁵⁴ As Moraga Valle argues, the Argentine movement developed a more nationalist focus in response to trans-Atlantic immigration. See, Moraga Valle, 207-215, for greater analysis on the nationalist versus internationalist natures of the Argentine and Chilean movements, respectively.

⁵⁵ While many of Santiago and Valparaíso’s students and laborers gravitated toward anarchism and anarcho-syndicalism, communist organizers made inroads in northern mining camps, where the FOCH, in particular, experienced significant growth. Communism was largely limited to the north during these years, and, for this reason, anarchism, and not communism, had the greatest ideological influence on students.

anarchist poet José Domingo Gómez Rojas, solidified the movement's anarchist, anti-oligarchical spirit.⁵⁶

Later that year, the moderate Arturo Alessandri's (1920-1924) ascension to presidency raised hopes among students and workers that the oligarchy's hold on political power would be broken. But Alessandri's victory proved to be "an empty triumph that produced no fundamental changes in Chilean social structure."⁵⁷ Students and workers alike quickly became disillusioned with Alessandri and his top-down reforms. The FECh became distanced from the FOCH, and a growing divide emerged between an anarchist faction and a reformist faction interested in working within the parliamentary system. If the early 1920s brought students and workers together under the banner of anarchism, it also fractured the student movement. By 1922, the Wobblies and anarcho-syndicalism had largely disappeared, due both to state repression and the emergence of the communist and socialist parties.⁵⁸ The student movement began to fade by this year, too, owing to heightened internal conflict. As Labarca and Gandulfo solidified alliances with the working class, their militancy exacerbated tensions within the FECh.⁵⁹ This would become a common trend in future cycles of mobilizations.

Disillusioned with Alessandri and weakened by internal divisions, the movement remained relatively dormant until 1931, when students would once again mobilize to overthrow Ibáñez's dictatorship. It was a different breed of students that led this mobilization, however. Instead of the bohemians of the 1910s and the anarchists of the early

⁵⁶ For an extensive overview on the life of Gómez Rojas and the effect of his death on Santiago's anarchist students and laborers see, Craib, *The Cry of the Renegade*.

⁵⁷ Bonilla and Glazer, *Student Politics in Chile*, 27.

⁵⁸ Craib, *The Cry of the Renegade*, 170.

⁵⁹ Craib, 67.

1920s, these protests were led by constitutional law students who worked within the political system. In addition, the 1931 protests were markedly different as Ibáñez's dictatorship had weakened the labor movement's organizing capabilities, much like Pinochet's dictatorship would do several decades later. Again, the student movement adopted a pacifist approach in opposition to the ruling elite as students went on strike, occupying the Casa Central of the Universidad de Chile and taking to the streets en masse. On July 25, this pressure forced Ibáñez to step down.⁶⁰

In retrospect, the mobilizations of 1931 must be viewed as a momentary spike in student protest during a period of relative quiescence that extended from 1922 until the late 1930s. As Pinto Vallejos and Salazar argue, the generation of the 1920s became incorporated into the "columna central de la 'nueva' clase política...y de los estratos superiores del aparato burocrático del Estado."⁶¹ This generation thus entered into mainstream politics, shedding the radical politics of their youth, much like their successors would following the 2011 mobilizations.⁶² With the institutionalization and cooptation of this generation, the movement lost its radicalism and energy. Furthermore, as Pinto Vallejos and Salazar argue, students were not mobilizing against the oligarchic political system, but rather against a personalist dictatorship. Once Ibáñez had been deposed, students no longer had a cause around which to mobilize.⁶³ A similar conundrum would befall the movement following the overthrow of Pinochet in the 1988 plebiscite.

⁶⁰ Pinto Vallejos and Salazar, *Niñez y juventud*, 200.

⁶¹ Pinto Vallejos and Salazar, 205.

⁶² As we shall see, Camila Vallejo, president of the FECh in 2011, faced harsh criticism after she joined the government as a Communist Deputy. A few of her fellow leaders also received similar criticism for the same reason.

⁶³ Pinto Vallejos and Salazar, *Niñez y juventud*, 205.

During the progressive Frente Popular administration, the FECh aligned with the government for the first time. The Frente Popular years saw a strengthening and expansion of the left, but these trends were not necessarily reflected in the student movement. As Bonilla and Glazer related, the student movement served as a barometer of national politics. The FECh became a political object to be won rather than an organization with values and ideology.⁶⁴

While students maintained ties with laborers, these linkages were loose and informal. Furthermore, as Bonilla and Glazer observe, it was the working class, not the students, that were the vanguard. Although the FECh actively participated, the Federation “was just one of a large number of organizations that were swept along in the upsurge of popular fervor aroused by the popular front and the promise of new and better times held out by Aguirre Cerda’s [1938-1941] candidacy.”⁶⁵

As the labor movement took the helm, this allowed students to focus on internal rebuilding and university-specific goals. The Chilean Communist Party at the time supported the idea that the students should not be focused on leading a socialist revolution, but rather should be turned inward “to work for the democratization of the university and to prepare it to become a free institution...providing cultural services to the whole people rather than to a narrow intellectual or professional elite.”⁶⁶

The student movement under the Frente Popular can also be distinguished from its predecessors by its lack of charismatic leaders, which Bonilla and Glazer call a “historical void” in the collective memory of the future movement. Furthermore, the student movement

⁶⁴ Bonilla and Glazer, *Student Politics in Chile*, 293.

⁶⁵ Bonilla and Glazer, 115.

⁶⁶ Bonilla and Glazer, 107.

of the 1940s failed to produce a clear vision and guiding values, such as the “Declaration of Principles” of 1920. What limited scholarship that exists on the movement during this era suggests that while it was a time of unity for the left, student mobilizations lay relatively dormant.

During the early years of the Cold War, the student movement would reengage with labor organizations and levy an antiimperialist critique against the state for its ties to the United States. With the founding of the Central Unitaria de Trabajadores (CUT) in 1953, students and laborers re-solidified their alliance. Once again, students mobilized against Ibáñez’s second term as president from 1952-1958, though he was democratically elected this time around. Under his presidency, students took to the streets, staging large demonstrations that often ended in violence against students and laborers. As Pinto Vallejos and Salazar note: “Callejeando, se reencontró con su identidad dormida, perdida o reprimida. Lo que sin duda era una hecho memorable, que debía celebrarse, callejeramente.”⁶⁷ In this decade, then, a renewed relationship with labor enabled students to return to the national political stage.

But the student movement in the 1950s never approximated the earlier mobilizations in the 1920s and 1930s. While the FECh upheld its connection with the CUT, these links were “informal and sporadic” due to internal conflicts within both organizations. As Bonilla and Glazer relate, “[s]tudents retained some sentimental notions about solidarity with the working class and some illusion that working-class people looked to them for leadership; however, these were not translated into any effective action on the part of the FECH as an organization.”⁶⁸

⁶⁷ Garretón and Martínez, *El movimiento estudiantil*, 92.

⁶⁸ Bonilla and Glazer, *Student Politics in Chile*, 167–68.

Over the first half century of the movement's history, students maintained a mostly consistent oppositional stance, at times more active than the labor movement and at other points mostly following organized labor's lead. As internal political divisions beset the student movement, mimicking political polarization on the national level, the strength of the ties between students and the working class underwent change, as well.

Observing the cycles of mobilization and dormancy that characterized the early history of the FECh and that have persisted into the present day, Bonilla and Glazer attribute such a pattern to the natural turnover of leadership. The ebb and flow of cycles of contention, they add, is "more directly tied to a basic rhythm of action and reaction, of movement from extreme political activism and externally directed operations toward political moderation and a reversal of attention to university affairs."⁶⁹ If the movement lay dormant by the middle of the century, another effervescent moment would occur during Salvador Allende's short-lived presidency.

Left and Right Take to the Streets under Allende's Unidad Popular

In the 1960s, a nationwide university reform movement emerged that would last through Allende's presidency. This time, change began with the FEUC and not the FECh. Students mobilized to modernize and democratize their university, granting greater representation for students. Students also demanded greater autonomy from the Catholic Church and fought for social justice more broadly. The Catholic University-led reform challenged the FECh's longstanding hegemony as the student movement became less centralized. While still the largest student organization, the FECh was no longer the center of

⁶⁹ Bonilla and Glazer, 293.

the movement as the Catholic Universities of Santiago and Valparaíso, as well as the Universidad de Concepción, gained ascendancy.

Garretón and Martínez suggest that the reform emerged from the Catholic universities because of “sus estructuras más tradicionales, en la doctrina de la Iglesia que en estos años se torna más preocupada por la labor social de las universidades, o, en la menor participación que tenían los partidos políticos, que permitió un movimiento más espontáneo.”⁷⁰ The FEUC was also likely emboldened by the Christian Democrat Eduardo Frei, who was elected president in 1964. Promising a “Revolution in Liberty,” Frei committed himself to social justice, the nationalization of copper, and agrarian reform. Even as the Reform demanded changes to the university, Garretón and Martínez argue:

La Reforma no fue percibida por los estudiantes como un problema meramente corporativo. Ella pasó a ser, de algún modo, la tarea antioligárquica de los estudiantes al poner a la Universidad al servicio de una sociedad en proceso de cambio. Los problemas nacionales y el anhelo de justicia social, junto también al deseo de modernizar la universidad, fue nuevamente lo que guió al movimiento estudiantil.⁷¹

As this Reform demonstrated, the student movement still maintained its anti-oligarchical roots and advocated for broader societal changes, even when directed by a more centrist party like the Christian Democrats.

At the same time, a reinvigorated movement within the FECh threw its support behind Allende’s bid for the presidency and helped bring his UP coalition to a narrow victory in 1970. Students maintained a close relationship with Allende’s government, while simultaneously maintaining their independence. Unlike their predecessors, the students that

⁷⁰ Garretón and Martínez, *El movimiento estudiantil*, 98.

⁷¹ Garretón and Martínez, 96.

mobilized during Allende's administration did not emerge from a network of social organizing with the working and popular classes. As Pinto Vallejos and Salazar explain, "el liderazgo revolucionario de 1970 tuvo una raigambre social débil y superficial, precisamente por su origen estudiantil y juvenil. No fue un liderazgo *surgido* desde las bases populares: necesitaba *implantarse* en ellas."⁷² As the previous half decade had shown, however, this was not uncommon; the links between students and laborers endured, but fluctuated regularly between superficiality and close collaboration.

The student movement within the UP also differed from its older iteration as it was more pragmatic and less rhetorical. Out of the universities' new political landscapes emerged numerous organizations, such as the Movimiento Izquierda Revolucionaria (MIR) and the Movimiento de Acción Popular Unitaria (MAPU).⁷³ The MIR was formed at the Universidad de Concepción in 1965, reaching its height in 1973 before being severely repressed under the dictatorship. These leftist organizations and loose ties with labor cultivated a strong sense of *poder popular*, found in the "cordones industriales, los consejos campesinos, los commandos comunales y las asambleas del pueblo."⁷⁴ This new form of solidarity enabled the popular classes, including students, to take decision making into their own hands, unleashing a revolution from below.⁷⁵

Under Allende, the streets became the political stage for political actors on the left, right, and center, who occupied urban space through marches and seizures of factories, schools and the streets. Through these occupations, Trumper argues, citizens "could redefine

⁷² Pinto Vallejos and Salazar, *Niñez y juventud*, 216–17, emphasis in original.

⁷³ Pinto Vallejos and Salazar, 217.

⁷⁴ Pinto Vallejos and Salazar, 224.

⁷⁵ For more on the "revolution from below" see, Peter Winn, *Weavers of Revolution: The Yarur Workers and Chile's Road to Socialism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986).

what it meant to be *allendistas* or anti-*allendistas* and...could politicize the categories and identities of *poblador*, worker, middle-class entrepreneur, housewife, or artist in new ways.”⁷⁶ Pinto Vallejos and Salazar expand upon this fight for control of the streets, or what they refer to as “*ganar la calle*,” acknowledging that this was often done through violent means.⁷⁷

The UP also saw the entrance of women in the political sphere, but as Carrie Endries notes, it was “only urban, upper middle and upper class women [who] were able to take advantage of” the opened political arena.⁷⁸ In particular, middle class women played a key role in redefining political activism in the public sphere as they left their houses and banged pots in the streets to call attention to food shortages. These *cacerolazos* challenged *who* could participate in politics and *where* this participation could occur, heralding “the public appearance of a women’s opposition movement.”⁷⁹ With these protests, middle and upper class women “attempt[ed] to reclaim city streets from Allende supporters, reimagine public space as a site of oppositional practice, and thereby redefine the terms and limits of urban politics.”⁸⁰ Taking to the streets in *cacerolazos*, these women redefined motherhood and politicized previously apolitical, domestic spaces.

While scholarship on the changing role of women during Allende’s brief rule largely neglects the role of university women, it is still useful in understanding how protest and political subjectivity changed under the UP. Soon enough, the protest from women of the right would help to completely change Chile’s political landscape. Though women and men

⁷⁶ Trumper, *Ephemeral Histories*, 14.

⁷⁷ Pinto Vallejos and Salazar, *Niñez y juventud*, 217.

⁷⁸ Endries, “*Si la mujer no está, la democracia no va*,” 24.

⁷⁹ Power, *Right-Wing Women in Chile*, 163.

⁸⁰ Trumper, *Ephemeral Histories*, 43.

alike would quickly lose their political voices under the next sixteen years of military rule, new actors continued to carve out space in the public sphere and embrace their newfound political identity.

Resistance under Dictatorship

On September 11, 1973, a military coup ended Allende's socialist revolution prematurely, ushering in sixteen years of censorship, repression, and torture. However, the dictatorship did not erase the past half century of organizing, but rather forced the student movement to change their tactics and operate clandestinely until mass protest erupted again in 1983. As the popular classes took to the streets once again, women from the left played an important role in denouncing the abuses of the dictatorship, reclaiming and reimagining their political identities, much like conservative women had during Allende's presidency.

In addition to disbanding student federations, Pinochet created the Federación de Centros de Estudiantes de la Universidad de Chile (FECECh) in 1978, in an attempt to limit organizing and to co-opt university students. The FECECh hoped to "depoliticize student elections by narrowing the range of candidates to those in one's own department."⁸¹ Pinochet's plan backfired, however, as the Christian Democrats, Communists, and Socialists won representation within the organization. As Schneider observes, "[s]tudents had used the government's attempts to coopt the movement to reclaim the democratic spaces closed by the

⁸¹ Schneider, *Shantytown Protest in Pinochet's Chile*, 123.

coup.”⁸² This statist organization was eventually dissolved in 1984, the same year that the FECh was reconstituted with renewed force.

After the dissolution of the FECh and other student federations in 1973, students had to find new ways to organize under dictatorship. This often took the form of cultural groups and institutions, such as art collectives or music groups. Within these collectives, students “held short rallies to protest high education fees, the presence of repressive agents in the universities, and, more generally, military intervention in academic life.”⁸³ In the first decade of the dictatorship, however, these protests were often erratic and lacked direction and cohesion.

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, this cultural opposition served as a foundation out of which the leftist parties reemerged. As Pinto Vallejos and Salazar note: “La observación cuidadosa de la ‘transición juvenil’ (y ciudadana) del período 1976-1983 muestra que los partidos de Izquierda (el P.C., el MIR y el MAPU, principalmente) reflataron sobre la marejada juvenil y cultural de fines de los ’70, y no al revés.”⁸⁴ Aesthetic and cultural production in the 1970s thus characterized the clandestine student movement and also gave rise to the leftist mobilizations that erupted in 1983.

Indeed, activism operated mostly in an underground fashion until May 11, 1983, when the Copper Workers’ Confederation led a national strike that triggered three years of near-monthly mobilizations.⁸⁵ Prior to these mobilizations, anti-regime “protests took the form of fasts, hunger strikes, and quick, limited public rallies” against government abuses.⁸⁶

⁸² Schneider, 124.

⁸³ Garretón, “Popular Mobilization and the Military Regime in Chile,” 266.

⁸⁴ Pinto Vallejos and Salazar, *Niñez y juventud*, 243.

⁸⁵ Steve J. Stern, *Battling for Hearts and Minds: Memory Struggle in Pinochet’s Chile, 1973-1988* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006), 250–53.

⁸⁶ Garretón, “Popular Mobilization and the Military Regime in Chile,” 265.

Though organized by copper workers, this strike had widespread appeal, which Garretón attributes to three factors: “[I]ts multiclass base, the involvement of Chile’s most powerful union, and stress on broadly based defiance rather than more limited work-based strikes.”⁸⁷ The ensuing protests galvanized workers, students, and *pobladores* alike. Unsurprisingly, it was this joint show of force between labor and students that dealt one of the strongest blows to the dictatorship.

Although it was copper workers who initiated the protest, a ravaged union rank-and-file played a diminished role in the oppositional movement throughout the 1980s. As Pinochet systematically repressed and silenced the political left, new spaces opened up for dissent in Santiago’s shantytowns in what scholars acknowledge as the transition from the “classes to masses.”⁸⁸ Young *pobladores* especially distrusted government negotiation and were not afraid to “express themselves more aggressively than had the middle and organized working classes.”⁸⁹ The mobilizations between 1983-1986 also adopted an expressive, carnivalesque spirit, harkening back to less politically-charged mobilizations of previous decades and suggesting that perhaps students were not as fearful of the repercussions of their actions.⁹⁰

Schneider acknowledges the historic role that these communities have played and credits their community solidarity to early grassroots organizing led by the Communist Party: “The capacity of Santiago’s poor urban neighborhoods to mobilize mass political resistance, despite a decade of severe military repression, lay in the political heritage of decades of work

⁸⁷ Garretón, 268.

⁸⁸ Susan Eckstein, ed., *Power and Popular Protest*; and Schneider, *Shantytown Protest in Pinochet’s Chile*.

⁸⁹ Garretón, “Popular Mobilization and the Military Regime in Chile,” 269.

⁹⁰ Stern, *Battling for Hearts and Minds*, 253.

in the popular culture and in the formation of a skilled generation of grassroots militants.”⁹¹

Dating back to the 1920s, poor urban neighborhoods were radicalizing points of contact between students and laborers. This time, however, peripheral shantytown *pobladores* became protagonists under the dictatorship and helped to revive the left.

Popular class women also were central actors under Pinochet. Through the formation of popular economic organizations (*organizaciones económicas populares*, or OEPs) that provided community aid such as public health or soup kitchens, these female *pobladores* created a collective identity that fought against structural patriarchal oppression. The proliferation of OEPs also challenged the division between public and private spheres “by moving formerly private domestic work into public, collective space and community.”⁹² *Ollas communes*, for example, became imbued with political meaning as women gathered in collective spaces to share food and organize. Politicizing their motherhood and domestic work, women reimagined themselves as political actors.

By the late 1980s, the fervor had begun to die down. In 1987, massive student protests led to the overthrow of the Universidad de Chile’s rector, José Luis Federici, marking the climax of the student mobilization in this decade.⁹³ Students had expelled Pinochet’s appointee and were reclaiming the university for themselves. This would be the final outburst for the student movement in this era.

Since 1906, these cycles of mobilization and silence permeated Chile’s political landscape and correlated with similar peaks and valleys in labor organization and leftist

⁹¹ Schneider, *Shantytown Protest in Pinochet’s Chile*, 9.

⁹² Endries, ““Si la mujer no está, la democracia no va,””49.

⁹³ Federici was appointed by Pinochet on August 21, 1987, but only lasted until October 29 of that same year. For more on Federici and the protests that overthrew him see, Diego García Monge, José Isla Madariaga, and Pablo Toro Blanco, *Los muchachos de antes: Historias de La FECH, 1973-1988*, (Santiago: Universidad Alberto Hurtado, 2006), 327–37.

politics more broadly. With each cycle, the student movement drew upon old tactics, ideologies, and alliances with the working class, bringing new actors into its fold. This first period in the movement's history saw an evolving political ideology, moving from a bohemian anarchism to a growing leftism throughout the 1920s. Coming in and out of close contact with the working and popular classes, students provided an oppositional critique that found common cause with the masses.

With the return to democracy in 1990, however, the student movement would no longer be working in opposition to the government, contributing to a surprising depoliticization of the movement. As the first eighty-five years of the student movement showed, however, there was never a complete nor enduring silence; this next period of dormancy, too, would eventually come to an end as students again took to the streets.

Chapter II

The Penguin Revolution

No tienen miedo, y luchan por un pase escolar gratuito. Son niños que no tienen memoria de la dictadura del general Augusto Pinochet. Estos escolares no tienen los temores de sus padres, como tampoco la gratitud de ser libres de la tiranía.⁹⁴

El Mercurio, June 2006

In 1988, civil society and political parties from the center and left banded together to form the Concertación de Partidos por el No (Coalition of Parties for the No).⁹⁵ In a resounding victory, the “No” galvanized mass support and put an end to military rule, mandating a presidential election in 1990.⁹⁶ While the campaign for the No represented a mass mobilization of society, the electoral campaign contributed to a fifteen year “silencing” of political activism. Ironically, social movements diminished after the return to democracy, as the center-left Concertación governments that held power for the first twenty years following Pinochet’s defeat actively sought to limit popular mobilizations in order to keep a tenuous democracy intact. Moreover, Concertación governments maintained the neoliberal policies put in place under Pinochet, exacerbating Chile’s growing socioeconomic divide.

After fifteen years of relative quiescence, mounting discontent with the effects of neoliberal restructuring would reach a breaking point during Bachelet’s first term as president. Protests erupted in 2006 as high school students led a series of nationwide strikes and school occupations. While previous years saw periodic student mobilizations, the

⁹⁴ “Movilización de colegios: Los niños y su lucha callejera,” *El Mercurio*, June 2, 2006.

⁹⁵ In the 1990 election, this would become the Concertación de Partidos por la Democracia (Coalition of Parties for Democracy), commonly abbreviated as the Concertación.

⁹⁶ It is important to note, however, that while the majority of the country was opposed to the dictatorship, 44% voted in favor of continuing Pinochet’s rule. Among the political right and the Chilean elite, there still existed significant support for the dictatorship, highlighting the polarized state of the nation.

Penguin Revolution was the largest protest since the fall of the dictatorship. Over more than a month of occupations, demonstrations, and government negotiations, students attacked Pinochet's neoliberal legacy head on, making educational reform a national concern. While students won some minor concessions, such as a free bus pass and the eventual repeal of the Ley Orgánica Constitucional de Enseñanza (LOCE), the Penguin Revolution did little to change Chile's for-profit education system.

Why did the movement reemerge in full force at this historical moment? As the epigraph from *El Mercurio* attests, the Pingüinos were a generation *sin miedo*. Coming of age under democracy, these students did not have the same fear of repression as their parents. Furthermore, Bachelet campaigned with the promise of a more participatory democracy. Students took this to heart, challenging her administration and forcing the government to address their demands.

The Penguin Revolution also brought together public and private high school students with university students, teachers, and families—by no means a homogeneous alliance. The multiple visions within the movement, their differing tactics and strategies, and debates around whether or not to negotiate with the government revealed a divided student movement. Ultimately, internal tensions and the lack of a coherent vision caused the movement to crumble. Although the Penguin Revolution did not win all of its demands, the size and mass appeal of the mobilizations was a tremendous victory for what had become a dormant, demobilized movement, refocusing national attention on the pernicious effects of neoliberal reform.

Demobilization in the Return to Democracy

As civil society coalesced to overthrow the dictatorship in 1988, the potential for alternative forms of political activism was diminished. As mentioned in Chapter 1, under military rule, *pobladores* had played a key role in community organizing under military rule, especially through popular economic organizations. However, political scientist Philip Oxhorn argues that during the campaign for the No, “[p]olitical party militants were reassigned to voter registration and campaign-related activities, and the leaders of popular organizations who did not belong to political parties often volunteered to help as well.”⁹⁷ With their focus diverted towards national electoral goals, these leaders could no longer engage in autonomous, radical politics that directly benefitted the popular classes.

But demobilization was not solely a result of the activists’ redirected focus; the Concertación administrations’ twenty-year rule actively sought to contain discontent from the popular classes and students. Fearful of a coup and protective of its newborn democracy, these politicians were far more cautious than their radical predecessors in the late 1960s and early 1970s. They portrayed “an image of moderation, conciliation, and pragmatism.”⁹⁸ Furthermore, the transition to democracy was spearheaded by the political elite, not the popular classes. It was thus in the interest of the ruling class to limit dissent to protect the terms of the negotiated transition. Working within Pinochet’s constitutional framework, Paley writes that “the political transition would proceed not through the activity of broad-based social movements but through a series of negotiations among elites, ironed out within

⁹⁷ Oxhorn, “Where Did All the Protesters Go?,” 58.

⁹⁸ Oxhorn, 55.

the military's constitutional framework.”⁹⁹ This transition and adherence to Pinochet's constitution determined the permissible forms of democracy and activism moving forward.

Thus, top-down, moderate change effectively limited the parameters of popular organization under democracy. As Oxhorn notes, “[t]he elitist nature of the transition required that the demands of all segments of Chilean society be moderated and their political participation managed by political elites within the limits of the electoral process.”¹⁰⁰ Popular sector organizing was considered a threat to the political class' conciliatory agenda. Fearful that popular class uprisings would undo Chile's fragile democracy, the Concertación administrations obligated citizens “to support the government and its actions because to do otherwise was to invite what was considered the only other alternative: authoritarian rule.”¹⁰¹ This binary left little room for people to negotiate or engage in their own form of politics. In this limited arena, the popular sectors were confined to the Concertación's vision of electoral politics, inhibiting these sectors from pursuing “alternative forms of political participation.”¹⁰²

Furthermore, many Concertación elites supported the economic model instituted under Pinochet. “Their project of sustaining the economic model was premised on keeping both labor and neighborhood social movements—groups that might create demands for housing, public services, or higher wages—in check,”¹⁰³ Paley contends. Leaving intact the political and economic reforms from the dictatorship, the Concertación's twenty-year rule exacerbated socioeconomic inequality. If the negotiated transition limited the potential for

⁹⁹ Paley, *Marketing Democracy*, 93.

¹⁰⁰ Oxhorn, “Where Did All the Protesters Go?,” 57.

¹⁰¹ Paley, *Marketing Democracy*, 116.

¹⁰² Oxhorn, “Where Did All the Protesters Go?,” 58.

¹⁰³ Paley, *Marketing Democracy*, 91.

political activism, it also fomented discontent with Pinochet's neoliberal legacy. In the late 1990s and early 2000s, this dissatisfaction would primarily revolve around the privatization of education, paving the way for the largest mobilizations since the return to democracy.

Post-Transition Silence and the Reemergence of the Student Left

The demobilizing effects of the negotiated transition were also felt within the student movement, which experienced a period of quiescence following the last major protests in the late 1980s. Though minor protests surfaced nearly every year, students were unable to generate or sustain a mass movement until 2006. In fact, with some exceptions, these fifteen years have attracted little attention from scholars. Thielemann Hernández provides one of the few thorough accounts of student mobilizations during this period, arguing against the grain that there was, in fact, such a movement.¹⁰⁴

Like the popular sector at large, the students also acceded to political realities at the end of the dictatorship. Abandoning their autonomous fight, they embraced the objectives of the electoral campaign, draining their energy and organizing capacity in the process. Additionally, the collapse of the Soviet Union prompted a crisis of confidence in the Chilean left.

The student movement receded once civilian rule had returned. As Thielemann Hernández argues, students had mobilized against the regime itself, not the policies enacted under dictatorship. Once students and civil society had overthrown Pinochet and restored

¹⁰⁴ The following section draws on Thielemann Hernández. Thielemann Hernández, *La anomalía social de la transición*.

democracy, the movement no longer had a clear objective, as students lost sight of the need for internal university reforms during the electoral campaign.¹⁰⁵ The movement also lost steam throughout the 1990s as a result of internal crises, particularly within the FECh.¹⁰⁶

As the movement gradually lost its footing throughout the 1990s, its demands were constrained by the neoliberal framework. Calling for an *arancel diferenciado* (sliding scale fee), for instance, did little to alter the neoliberal structures behind university fees.¹⁰⁷ As Thielemann Hernández argues, “[l]a idea de ‘gratuidad’, que incluía un cuestionamiento más profundo al autofinanciamiento y al régimen de mercado, es desplazada entonces por una aproximación más posibilista.”¹⁰⁸ By accepting the neoliberal framework as a *fait accompli*, students had little space to make more radical demands or attack the underlying structural issues.

Throughout the 1990s and early 2000s, the movement also zeroed in on university democratization, calling for greater student representation in decision making processes. Under the dictatorship, most of the power was given to rectors and other administrators. With attention focused primarily on democratization and university financing, the movement reverted to a corporatist focus that failed to extrapolate structural critiques encompassing broader social grievances.

If the 1990s were characterized by relatively dormant student federations, the decade also saw the beginnings of a revival of a militant student left. This reconstituted left “pudo

¹⁰⁵ Thielemann Hernández, *La anomalía social de la transición*, 70.

¹⁰⁶ For a discussion on the internal crises and corruption in various federations see, Thielemann Hernández, 86–91.

¹⁰⁷ As we will see, *arancel diferenciado* would be at the center of debates during the 2011 movement, as students agitated for structural, rather than piecemeal, reform.

¹⁰⁸ Thielemann Hernández, 17.

romper con los límites del viejo movimiento estudiantil (pequeño, muy elitario [*sic*] y fuertemente determinado por las necesidades de la pequeña política tradicional).”¹⁰⁹ Experimenting with political autonomy and horizontal forms of governance through *colectivos* and *asambleas*, this new movement represented a significant break from the elitist nature of past student politics. The movement also began to turn away from demands centered around students’ interests, instead drawing its demands from the base of society. But even as the movement drew upon widespread discontent and levied broader critiques, it still remained relatively siloed and failed to create strong ties with popular sectors.

In 1997, the FECh led the decade’s largest protests. Those demonstrations were not an explosion, but rather the consequence of steadily increasing discontent. Students took over schools with *tomas* and *paros* in protest against the Ley Marco de Universidades Estatales, a university financing law. At the national level, university students protested the Ley Marco and the LOCE, arguing that these laws promoted the privatization of education. The LOCE, which was introduced on the penultimate day of Pinochet’s presidency, granted greater local control over education. This led to a stark divide between public and private schools, as management of secondary schools was placed under the control of cash-strapped municipalities, often with minimal federal oversight and reduced funding.

The LOCE reified neoliberal beliefs in the freedom to choose, placing educational choices in the hands of parents to the disadvantage of families who could not afford to send their children to subsidized or private schools. This decentralized educational system furthered inequality and discrimination as private schools could choose who to admit, often

¹⁰⁹ Thielemann Hernández, 104.

taking the form of discriminatory practices. By fighting against the LOCE, students attacked the growing privatization and decentralization of education and the resulting socioeconomic inequalities. This fight for quality education without profit, “*No al lucro*,” became the rallying cry of the Penguin Revolution.

Protests spread throughout the country, though they were felt the strongest in Santiago, especially in the communist-led Universidad de Chile and the Universidad de Santiago de Chile. By June, 50,000 students had mobilized across the country. Protests also began to take on a different tone, as demonstrators employed carnivalesque tactics. Leaving behind the more confrontational tactics of the Allende and Pinochet eras, the 1997 mobilizations represented a new way of engaging with *la calle*, “sin que se abandonara la resistencia y rebeldía callejera.”¹¹⁰ It is important to note, however, that these more playful, spontaneous demonstrations were not of the same magnitude as later protests, usually mobilizing several thousand students at a time. Though the character of the mobilizations had changed, they were modest in scale. Furthermore, the protests did not have “active support from a broader spectrum of actors” since “the demands were centered on a specific issues that affected public universities and the protagonists were almost exclusively public university students.”¹¹¹ They were significant in that they represented the first major clash between social movements and the governments of the transition, a “rupture of tranquility,” as Thielemann Hernández put it.¹¹²

While some federations achieved minor victories in the form of democratization and funding changes, the 1997 protests did not bring about significant educational reform. They

¹¹⁰ Thielemann Hernández, 162.

¹¹¹ Cummings, “Democracy and Student Discontent,” 54.

¹¹² Thielemann Hernández, *La anomalía social de la transición*, 159.

did, however, demonstrate the reenergized strength of the student movement. Moving beyond the internal rebuilding of the early 1990s, the 1997 protests refocused the movement more broadly on the educational crisis at hand, laying the groundwork for future mobilizations.

The 1997 mobilizations did not indicate a completely renewed or unified movement, however. At the turn of the millennium, the student movement experienced internal divisions along competing ideological lines. For example, after the 1997 protests, southern federations broke off from the Confech to form the Confesur (Confederación de Estudiantes del Sur). Unlike their communist counterparts who eschewed the mainstream politics, the leaders of Confesur belonged to Concertación parties and sought to reach an agreement with the Mineduc (Ministry of Education). The creation of Confesur did not represent a complete rupture, but rather a parallel body expressly created by the Concertación to weaken the communists' influence within the Confech.¹¹³

The movement also experienced further factionalism during the Congreso Nacional de Estudiantes (CNE), held in June 1998 in Valparaíso. Organized with the intention of uniting students under a common platform and strengthening the Confech, ironically, the CNE exacerbated growing divisions. The conference was “broken” when Concertación members abstained on the final day, unwilling to concede to policies pushed forward by the communist majority.¹¹⁴

With university students in disarray, high school students took center stage in 2000 in a series of protests against transportation fee hikes soon after the Socialist Ricardo Lagos

¹¹³ Southern universities, and southern Chile in general, have consistently expressed more centrist tendencies than their Santiaguino counterparts. Thielemann Hernández, 163–65.

¹¹⁴ Thielemann Hernández, 173–78.

(2000-2006) was inaugurated. Buttressed by the restructuring of secondary school organizations, these students created horizontal forms of leadership and participation. Up to this point, the Asamblea de Centros de Alumnos de Santiago (ACAS) and Federación de Estudiantes Secundarios de Santiago (FESES) had served as the main organizing bodies of secondary students. However, the ACAS, which organized school federations based on a decree created under military rule, came under fire for its authoritarian origin. The FESES was highly criticized for its hierarchical structure and “its lack of an agenda on the students’ everyday life issues resulted in a low capacity to convene,”¹¹⁵ according to Donoso.

In 2000, the FESES was dissolved, and the Asamblea Coordinadora de Estudiantes Secundarios (ACES) emerged out of its ashes, bringing together students that disapproved of the ACAS and the FESES. The ACES distanced itself from political parties and created a more horizontal structure with assemblies and elected spokespeople that drew upon anarchist organizing principles.¹¹⁶ The ACES also included representatives from *colectivos sociales*, “smaller groups of students that represented the ‘inorganic’ Left.” The addition of these informal organizations was especially important as it expanded the ACES’s membership.¹¹⁷

Out of this horizontal structure emerged the 2001 Mochilazo protests, named for secondary students’ backpacks. Students demanded reduced fees for the *pase escolar* as well as state control of the bus pass administration, which up to then had been in the hands of private companies. Similar to the university movements of the preceding years, the

¹¹⁵ Donoso, “Dynamics of Change in Chile,” 6.

¹¹⁶ Domedel and Peña y Lillo, *El mayo de los pingüinos*, 49.

¹¹⁷ Donoso, “Dynamics of Change in Chile,” 6.

Mochilazo emerged out of a growing social crisis and discontent with the state of education, and its demands were grounded in familial grievances.

Like the protests several years earlier, the Mochilazo failed to mobilize great numbers of secondary students. It did, however, demonstrate the growing strength and organizational capabilities of student leaders and secondary school organizations. After several weeks of protests, some of which mobilized up to 12,000 students, the Lagos administration capitulated to students' demands, committing to assume control of transportation and reduce fees. Despite these triumphs, students were quick to offer up critiques of their movement, admitting that "mobilizing more students for a broader agenda of education reforms was not a feasible goal at that time."¹¹⁸ While the Mochilazo did not address broader social demands, it laid the organizational blueprint for successive secondary mobilizations.

A proposed student loan reform in 2005, the Ley de Financiamiento de la Educación Superior, triggered another wave of protests with important consequences for the student movement. This reform established the Créditos con Aval del Estado (State Guaranteed Student Loans, or CAE), a loan system that made credit more available through state-guaranteed private loans, granting its administration to the free market.¹¹⁹ These private loans had a much higher interest rate at 7%, which led to extremely high delinquency rates for loan repayment.¹²⁰ Mobilizing against the CAE, students attacked the deepening effects of neoliberal restructuring by Concertación administrations.

¹¹⁸ Donoso, 7.

¹¹⁹ Thielemann Hernández, *La anomalía social de la transición*, 208.

¹²⁰ Indira Palacios-Valladares, "Internal Movement Transformation and the Diffusion of Student Protest in Chile," *Journal of Latin American Studies* 49, no. 03 (August 2017): 596; Mary Rose Kubal and Eloy Fisher, "The Politics of Student Protest and Education Reform in Chile: Challenging the Neoliberal State," *The Latin Americanist* 60, no. 2 (June 2016): 225; and Thielemann Hernández, *La anomalía social de la transición*, 208.

Though the CAE became a law later in the year, protests led to important negotiations between the Confech and Mineduc. Tired of yearly negotiations with protestors, the Secretaría Regional Ministerial de Educación (SEREMI of Educación) created a “more permanent dialogue platform in 2005,”¹²¹ bringing together students from the ACAS and ACES in weekly meetings. Even if these negotiations were not entirely successful,¹²² they taught students to negotiate with government officials. This would prove essential during the mass protests the following year. These formal negotiations, Donoso argues, “gave the students more expertise on the problems within the education system, and this, in contrast to the 2001 Mochilazo, made the Pingüinos movement’s demands much more focused on the structural problems of the system as [a] whole.”¹²³ Through these negotiations, students also unintentionally formed social networks. Thus, after 2005, the conditions were in place for a mass movement to emerge. Building upon widespread discontent, leaders utilized student organizations and networks as well as their newly developed negotiation skills to challenge the state and demand even greater reforms.

Beginnings of the Penguin Revolution

On April 24, 2006, over three thousand students occupied schools in Lota, a city in the Concepción metropolitan area. Joined by more than two hundred professors, these students began an indefinite *toma* in response to the collapse of a school roof from strong

¹²¹ Donoso, “Dynamics of Change in Chile,” 8.

¹²² An article in *RBP* notes, however, that during negotiations around *arancel diferenciado*, the government began considering free education for the two lowest *quintiles* and “el Ministerio ya habla de 100% cobertura en ayuda estatal para los 3 primeros quintiles.” “¿Y qué conseguimos con las movilizaciones del primer semestre?,” *RBP* (August 2005).

¹²³ Donoso, “Dynamics of Change in Chile,” 8.

autumn rains. Students barricaded themselves in and slept in their schools, maintaining physical control of the building. While the *toma* ended a few days later, with over sixty students detained,¹²⁴ protests in Lota sparked mobilizations across the country. In Santiago, 4,000 students protested similar infrastructural deficiencies and the delayed delivery of the *pase escolar*. Soon thereafter, the demands broadened to include a protest of the high cost of the Prueba de Selección Universitaria (PSU), the university entrance exam.

Within a few weeks, these protests grew into the largest mobilization since the fall of the dictatorship. At its zenith, the movement mobilized nearly one million students. While the Penguin Revolution is often regarded as an explosive protest that represented the reawakening of the student movement, such an ahistorical analysis fails to consider the sustained crescendo of student discontent over the previous decade and a half. It was, however, a turning point, heralding the emergence of a new mass movement.

Leadership, Organizational Structure, and Demands

Like the 2005 movement, the Penguin Revolution benefitted from horizontal, democratic governance, this time led by the Asamblea de Estudiantes Secundarios de Santiago (AES). Formed in December 2005 from the merging of the ACES and the ACAS, the AES “adopted the ACES’ non-hierarchical decision-making-mechanisms and model of leadership.”¹²⁵ At its helm were four student leaders, all of whom represented municipal schools: César Valenzuela and Karina Delfino (both from the ACAS with strong ties to the

¹²⁴ “Contra alcalde: Liceos de Lota en paro indefinido,” *El Mercurio*, April 27, 2006.

¹²⁵ Donoso, “Dynamics of Change in Chile,” 9.

Socialist Party, which belonged to the Concertación) and Juan Carlos Herrera and María Jesús Sanhueza (representatives from the ACES).¹²⁶ The AES also included conservative student leaders like Germán Westhoff, who was a member of the right-wing Unión Democrática Independiente (UDI), and led the student federation of the Instituto Nacional, Chile's most prestigious municipal school. Such diverse leadership ultimately contributed to the factionalization of the movement.

The AES' horizontal structure initially broadened the movement's political representation, helping to increase popular support and preventing any one political party from coopting the movement. Moreover, the incorporation of the ACES and its *colectivos sociales* expanded the reach of the AES as it spread beyond the "emblematic schools," Chile's top-ranked high schools based on high PSU averages. Top-tier schools, such as the Instituto Nacional, the Confederación Suiza, and the Liceo de Aplicación, were some of the first to mobilize.¹²⁷

Initially, students made concrete demands for a free, unlimited student bus pass (previously, the pass had been limited to two rides per day) and the waiver of PSU fees for the lowest three quintiles. These short-term demands grew out of familial issues. Valentina Núñez Pascual, a student at la Pontificia Universidad Católica de Valparaíso (PUCV), explained:

Las primeras demandas eran pequeñas, pero eran productos de un problema grande...las primeras cosas que salen a la vista son cosas que afectan el bolsillo, la

¹²⁶ For more on the leadership and the tensions between these various organizations see, Donoso, "Dynamics of Change in Chile"; and Domedel and Peña y Lillo, *El mayo de los pingüinos*.

¹²⁷ Domedel and Peña y Lillo, *El mayo de los pingüinos*, 21.

plata, por ejemplo, el pase. El pase escolar es importante porque generalmente una persona que estudia no trabaja...entonces es un gasto extra para la familia, para que uno de sus hijos vaya al colegio.... Que sea un pase escolar que sea nacional y que sirva...los siete días a la semana...es algo que les tocó al bolsillo de los estudiantes.

As she argued, these small demands, which affected families' "pockets," were not trivial, but rather served to uncover latent structural inequalities inherited from the dictatorship. "Sirvió de a poco para escarbar problemas que estaban ocultos y que yo considero que vienen desde mucho, mucho antes...privatización, la municipalización de los colegios."¹²⁸ Indeed, privatization and municipalization of education came to be the central themes of the movement.

These concrete, short-term demands quickly expanded to more substantive, long-term demands. These included the repeal of the LOCE and a reform of the Jornada Escolar Completa (JEC), which mandated a full school day without dedicating sufficient resources for extended hours, such as extracurricular activities and food rations.¹²⁹ Sanhueza declared: "[Q]uereamos que el gobierno asuma el fracaso de la Jornada Escolar Completa y actúe en consecuencia, ya sea derogándola o inyectando los recursos que realmente funcione."¹³⁰ Dividing demands into concrete calls for larger reforms was a strategic decision intended to mobilize students around the prospective achievement of immediate goals. If students won the free *pase escolar*, for example, it was believed that there would be sufficient support and momentum to demand a repeal of the LOCE.

¹²⁸ Interview, Valentina Núñez Pascual, August 8, 2017.

¹²⁹ Domedel and Peña y Lillo, *El mayo de los pingüinos*, 62.

¹³⁰ "María Jesús Sanhueza y Juan Herrera, voceros de la asamblea," *RBP* (May 2006).

To force their agenda upon the state, students launched disruptive protests and school occupations. This contentious repertoire captured media attention, which bolstered public support and necessitated a response from the state. In an interview, Delfino explained: “Tú puedes hacer una campaña masiva y repetir por qué te estás manifestando, pero nunca nadie te va a pescar en serio hasta que conquistas a los medios de comunicación.”¹³¹ *Paros, tomas*, and marches thus gave the movement added visibility, enabling students to incorporate these larger demands as public support for the movement increased.

Escalations and Negotiations

The first major protest broke out on May 10 as thousands of students participated in a national strike while student leaders began negotiations with government officials. Though the protests were felt strongly in Santiago, where the meeting was held, demonstrations from Arica in the north all the way to Punta Arenas in the extreme south demonstrated the reach of the movement and the impressive coordination between student groups across the country. Student leaders left negotiations that day dissatisfied with the government’s minor concessions. As Valenzuela said, “[l]os temas más fáciles avanzaron, los más duros no tuvieron respuestas concretas.” Students suggested that protests would continue, and surprisingly “las autoridades no les pidieron ningún compromiso para frenar las movilizaciones.”¹³² This sequence of negotiations and intensified protests would come to characterize the movement.

¹³¹ Karina Delfino, quoted in Domedel and Peña y Lillo, *El mayo de los pingüinos*, 100.

¹³² Marianne Hüne, “Secundarios: Diálogo no garantiza el fin de la ola de movilizaciones,” *El Mercurio*, May 12, 2006.

Unfavorable media coverage of the strike zeroed in on the violence and destruction caused by the protests. *El Mercurio* highlighted this with provocative titles such as: “Casi mil 200 detenidos: Violencia estudiantil se sintió de norte a sur.”¹³³ The article attributed the violence, however, to *encapuchados*¹³⁴ that infiltrated the protests, acknowledging that the student leaders did not condone the violence. Questionable headlines and photographs of hooded students smashing park benches, breaking into cars, and setting fires in the streets only served to further the conservative paper’s one-sided narrative (See Figure 2:1). Detailed accounts of arrests in cities throughout the country and vandalized businesses accentuated the allegedly delinquent nature of the protests.¹³⁵



Figure 2:1
Coverage from *El Mercurio* highlighting violence and
destruction of the May 10 demonstration. Courtesy of the AFECh.

¹³³ Hüne and Víctor Zúñiga, “Casi mil 200 detenidos: Violencia estudiantil se sintió de norte a sur,” *El Mercurio*, May 11, 2006.

¹³⁴ *Encapuchados*, or literally, “hooded ones,” were students or outside agitators often responsible for acts of vandalism or violence during protests. Usually working outside of student organizations, *encapuchados* often infiltrated peaceful marches and sparked violence, against the wishes of pacifist student leaders.

¹³⁵ Jorge Molina, “Marchas en regiones: Universitarios, mineros, y Mapuches en los disturbios,” *El Mercurio*, May 11, 2006.

Other coverage sought to provoke public antipathy towards the movement by focusing on financial losses to schools and buses affected by strikes, with headlines proclaiming “36 mil escolares sin clases debido a conflicto estudiantil.”¹³⁶ It is important to note, however, the detrimental and divisive impact of the *paros*. Many students and families had just cause to bemoan school closures; the longer the schools were occupied, the greater the possibility students would have to repeat an academic year. For families paying for secondary education, this meant losing money each day the strike continued. By focusing on violence, vandalism, and lost class time, the mainstream press actively attempted to stigmatize the movement.

To counter this negative coverage, students changed tactics, beginning a series of occupations. On May 19, the Instituto Nacional mounted the first *toma* (See Figure 2:2), and Santiago’s other emblematic high schools quickly followed suit. School occupations provided a less confrontational alternative to “las movilizaciones callejeras que cada vez se tornaban más violentas.”¹³⁷ Conscious of the negative press coverage, students hoped that shifting demonstrations to the schools themselves would reduce violence and change their public image.

Mobilizations escalated in advance of Bachelet’s presidential address on May 21. Students announced another national mobilization for May 18 in hopes that she would acknowledge their demands. In her speech, not only did Bachelet fail to address their concerns, she levied harsh critiques against the violence in previous protests:

¹³⁶ Zúñiga, “Tomas y paros de liceos municipalizados: 36 mil escolares sin clases debido a conflicto estudiantil,” *El Mercurio*, May 25, 2006.

¹³⁷ Domedel and Peña y Lillo, *El mayo de los pingüinos*, 15.



Figure 2:2

The Instituto Nacional *en toma*. The banner presents the movement's main demands: "LOCE: repeal; JEC: complete revision; municipalization: public establishments in the hands of the state." https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Instituto_Nacional_en_toma.jpg.

Quiero ciudadanos críticos, conscientes, que planteen sus ideas y sus reivindicaciones. Pero esa crítica debe hacerse con un espíritu constructivo, con propuestas sobre la mesa y, lo más importante, a cara descubierta y sin violencia. Quiero ser muy clara: lo que hemos visto en semanas recientes es inaceptable. ¡No toleraré el vandalismo, ni los destrozos, ni la intimidación a las personas! Aplicaré todo el rigor de la ley. La democracia la ganamos con la cara descubierta y debemos continuar con la cara descubierta.¹³⁸

¹³⁸ "Sus párrafos principales: Mensaje de la presidenta Michelle Bachelet," *El Mercurio*, May 22, 2006.

Bachelet's characterization of violent thugs unable to present their demands in "constructive" ways furthered the narrative articulated in the mainstream media. Her failure to respond to student concerns and her patronizing critiques backfired. Secondary students throughout the country mounted more *tomas* and *paros* and gave the administration one week to respond to their demands.¹³⁹

Following these protests, Minister of Education Martín Zilic extended another offer to negotiate. On May 29, however, he announced that his sub-secretary, Pilar Romaguera, would take his place. Upset by this decision, students responded: "[Y]a no queremos hablar con técnicos, porque las soluciones son políticas."¹⁴⁰ The government also limited the number of students that could participate in the negotiations, which students cited as another reason for their refusal to participate.¹⁴¹ After rejecting Zilic's offer, students began the largest protest since the return to democracy, mobilizing close to one million students.

Over 50,000 students took to the streets in peaceful protests in the capital, while roughly 800,000 students joined the strike throughout the country. According to *El Mercurio*, 939 high schools participated in the strike, representing about 80% of the nation's secondary students. Private high schools also joined in, reflecting strong support for the movement across socioeconomic backgrounds. Acknowledging their privileged status, one student remarked: "Tenemos la suerte de vivir en una situación privilegiada, pero los jóvenes somos el futuro de Chile y entre todos tenemos que surgir."¹⁴² Private schools organized *paros*

¹³⁹ Hüne and René Olivares, "Secundarios molestos con Presidenta: Escolares aumentan presión al Gobierno tras el mensaje," *El Mercurio*, May 22, 2006.

¹⁴⁰ Delfino, quoted in Domedel and Peña y Lillo, *El mayo de los pingüinos*, 108.

¹⁴¹ Zúñiga and Hüne, "Caos en el Mineduc: La historia del quiebre de la mesa de diálogo," *El Mercurio*, May 30, 2006.

¹⁴² Trinidad Cerda, Secretary of El Centro de Alumnas de Colegio Villa María Academy, quoted in M. Carvajal, P. Venegas, and P. Rey, "Sector oriente de Santiago: Colegios particulares se suman al paro," *El Mercurio*, May 31, 2006.

culturales that consisted of assemblies, “*jornadas de reflexión*,” and related cultural activities. Coverage in *El Mercurio* was quick to note the distinctly “democratic” and apolitical participation from private schools, who organized democratic meetings to vote on whether or not to participate and “tuvieron especial cuidado de que el tema no se politizara.”¹⁴³ This favorable coverage reflected a clear class bias towards private school students.

Over 100,000 university students also joined the May 30 demonstrations. Finding common cause with the Pingüinos’ demands, they acknowledged that “las demandas de los ‘pingüinos’ son parte de la reforma integral a la educación que ellos también han solicitado al Gobierno.”¹⁴⁴ The participation of private university students alongside students from Santiago’s traditional universities indicated a significant expansion of the movement.

Even though the demonstrations were mostly peaceful, protestors were met with police repression. Santiago saw disproportionately high arrests compared to other regions, with 619 students arrested in the metropolitan region and only 111 arrested in the other regions combined. In a surprising shift in tone, *El Mercurio* acknowledged the excessive force used by police in Santiago. A furious Sanhueza contended: “El Gobierno está asustado por lo que ha sido la organización estudiantil y quieren frenarla como sea.”¹⁴⁵ Another student echoed this brutality in *RBP*: “El mayor paro de la educación desde, al menos, la UP [Unidad Popular], con cientos de miles de adherentes a la revolución liderada por los secundarios, tuvo por contraparte la vergüenza de la acción de Carabineros, con su represión

¹⁴³ Carvajal, Venegas, and Rey.

¹⁴⁴ Hüne and Rey, “Convocatoria es a una movilización pacífica: Más de 300 mil escolares hoy en el paro nacional,” *El Mercurio*, May 30, 2006.

¹⁴⁵ Sanhueza, quoted in Hüne, “Masiva convocatoria de secundarios: Casi 800 mil escolares pararon en todo Chile,” *El Mercurio*, May 31, 2006.

y violencia digna de un estado de sitio.”¹⁴⁶ As the mobilizations gained force, repression intensified.

While students marched along the Alameda, Santiago’s central artery, leaders met inside the Biblioteca Nacional, this time with Zilic in attendance. The Ministry made a few minor concessions, offering a free PSU and *pase escolar* for the lowest three quintiles.¹⁴⁷ Not surprisingly, students rejected these modest demands. In a televised address the next day, Bachelet announced the creation of the Consejo Asesor Presidencial para la Calidad de la Educación (Advisory Commission on the Quality of Education, or CAP) to focus on longer-term demands, primarily reforms to the LOCE, JEC, and the de-municipalization of schools. In a more conciliatory speech, Bachelet again emphasized student participation, consistent with her campaign promises of a more participatory democracy:

Pero quiero, particularmente, invitar a los estudiantes a participar. Ustedes han puesto el tema al medio del debate de la sociedad. Las energías que ustedes han mostrado y que ha despertado este movimiento no se puede perder. Queremos recoger todo lo valioso de sus planteamientos para hacer de la educación, una educación mucho mejor, de mayor calidad.¹⁴⁸

With a new infrastructure for negotiations in place, the government sought to co-opt the movement.

¹⁴⁶ “Paro de la educación del 30 de mayo tuvo de todo: Histórica jornada de movilizaciones,” *RBP* (May 2006).

¹⁴⁷ Zúñiga and Otón Gutiérrez, “Gobierno-Secundarios: Cinco temas clave trató mesa de diálogo,” *El Mercurio*, May 31, 2006.

¹⁴⁸ “Mejoramiento de la educación: Bachelet enfrenta las urgencias y propone una reforma estructural,” *El Mercurio*, June 2, 2006.

The government's partial concessions and the creation of the CAP left student leaders in a quandary: should they continue with *paros* and *tomas* or resume negotiations? *El Mercurio* accentuated the discord within the movement, pitting statements of student leaders against one another. A case in point was an article noting that Delfino "repetía que la oferta del Gobierno era 'una clara victoria de los estudiantes'. Pero bastó que llegara otra dirigente, María Huerta, para que contradijera a Delfino, afirmando que sólo se trataba de 'una victoria a medias.'"¹⁴⁹ This effort to sow divisions within the student leadership, together with generalized fatigue and a lack of "a common agenda for reform,"¹⁵⁰ undermined the movement's cohesion.

Despite Bachelet's proposals, many schools decided to continue *en paro*. In a radio address on June 3, she held her ground and stated that the government had done all that it could. Once again, Bachelet adopted a rather condescending tone, denouncing student vandalism and destruction: "Yo sé que en democracia todo el mundo tiene derecho a movilizarse, y si lo hacen debe ser en forma seria, responsable y debe evitarse caer en vandalismos. Así como me parece que no es posible que haya violencia y abuso por parte de las Fuerzas de Orden y de Seguridad, tampoco es aceptable, y no vamos a aceptar, el vandalismo." While Bachelet welcomed further proposals from students, she disingenuously remarked "ya no estamos en proceso de negociación."¹⁵¹ The firmness and finality of this final statement was clearly at odds with her earlier pledge of a more participatory democracy.

¹⁴⁹ Olivares, "Dos sectores pugnan por solución: Las contradicciones que hacen 'tambalear' a los secundarios," *El Mercurio*, June 4, 2006.

¹⁵⁰ Donoso, "Dynamics of Change in Chile," 12.

¹⁵¹ Anyel Alfaro M., "Entrevista radial: Bachelet: 'No estamos en proceso de negociación,'" *El Mercurio*, June 4, 2006.

Divisions and Demobilization

On June 5, a general strike would increase tensions within the movement that ultimately fractured the leadership and brought an end to the mobilizations. Despite appeals from student leaders for a peaceful “*paro social*,” the strike was again tainted by isolated, yet rather extreme, cases of violence. Incidents of violence exploded throughout the city center, particularly along the Alameda. These acts were attributed to the Frente Patriótico Manuel Rodríguez, a radical leftist group infamous for its use of violent direct action. Other cities held peaceful riots, however, demonstrating the largely nonviolent nature of the movement. Valparaíso, for example, saw the largest protest that day outside of Santiago with over 15,000 high school students, university students, and teachers in attendance.¹⁵²

Negotiations on June 5 confirmed the participation of student leaders in the CAP, which the government hoped “podría poner fin a más de un mes de conflicto entre los estudiantes secundarios con el Gobierno.” As Senator Mariano Ruiz-Esquide, president of the Senate’s Education Committee noted: “[L]o más importante fue que el Gobierno está disponible para que los jóvenes secundarios participen en el Consejo Asesor Presidencial, en una fórmula adecuada, junto a los profesores, universitarios y los apoderados.” Redirecting conversations to formal negotiations around a table in an “appropriate form,” the CAP sought to demobilize the Penguin Revolution. For the government, students’ willingness to participate in the Commission “podría poner fin al conflicto, pero no a la crisis educacional.”¹⁵³ That is, the government hoped that these negotiations would bring an end to

¹⁵² Molina, “Movilización de secundarios: Marchas masivas y a la vez pacíficas hubo en regiones,” *El Mercurio*, June 6, 2006.

¹⁵³ Zúñiga and Pablo Reed, “Inminente salida a conflicto estudiantil con el gobierno: Senado logra acuerdo con los secundarios,” *El Mercurio*, June 6, 2006.

the immediate conflict, even if it realized that it would not resolve the greater educational crisis.

The June 5 protest also led to the resignation of two key student leaders: Valenzuela and Delfino, whose ties to the Concertación made them more moderate than their fellow leaders. According to a report in *El Mercurio*, “César Valenzuela, reconocido en muchos sectores por su sensatez, pues dejó tal rol justo cuando la dilatación del conflicto se hacía patente en estos últimos días.”¹⁵⁴ Describing Valenzuela as “wise,” the paper revealed a clear bias that pitted Valenzuela and Delfino against their more leftist counterparts. Furthermore, on the day of the scheduled strike, *El Mercurio* published a short article on Sanhueza, criticizing her abysmal school attendance and blaming her communist ties for the radicalization of the movement and students’ rejection of government concessions. “Ella participa en las Juventudes Comunistas, lo que para muchos es el factor que explica el afán de ‘alargar el conflicto’ hasta lo máximo, sin reconocer la oferta del Gobierno.”¹⁵⁵ It was likely not a coincidence that this article was published the day of the strike; it was an obvious attempt to villainize one of the movement’s leaders and to capitalize upon its growing fissures.

Many schools decided to end *paros* and return to classes following the June 5 protest, signaling the end of the mobilizations. The ACES, however, voted to continue with *tomas* and *paros*, demanding greater student representation in the CAP.¹⁵⁶ While the media certainly presented a skewed perception of the divisions within the movement, it was not

¹⁵⁴ Hüne, Reed, and Zúñiga, “Tras 22 días de toma: Alumnos entregan hoy el Instituto Nacional,” *El Mercurio*, June 9, 2006, 22.

¹⁵⁵ Olivares, “Por ‘radicalizar’ movimiento: María Jesús, la figura más controvertida,” *El Mercurio*, June 5, 2007.

¹⁵⁶ Hüne, “Asamblea de secundarios: Alumnos mantienen paros y tomas,” *El Mercurio*, June 7, 2006.

completely inaccurate. By this point, tensions ran high at schools such as the Instituto Nacional, whose representatives had voted to continue *en paro*. After twenty-two days, however, students there voted to end their occupation, signaling “el desplome definitivo del movimiento estudiantil.”¹⁵⁷ By June 12, the majority of high schools had resumed classes, leaving only a handful of “rebel” schools still on strike.¹⁵⁸

Tilly and Tarrow help to make sense of this fissure between those who wanted to enter negotiations and those who voted to maintain mobilizations. “Masses of ordinary people who erupt into the streets and out of the factories are eventually discouraged by the repression, boredom, and desire for a routine life that eventually affects most protestors,” they write. “Those who lead them respond in one of two opposing ways: [institutionalization and radicalization].”¹⁵⁹ Facing repression and burnout, many leaders viewed institutionalization as their best bet, while the more radical leaders, such as Sanhueza and Herrera, opted for a more confrontational approach.

Conclusion

Two key factors help explain why the Penguin Revolution emerged at this historical juncture. First of all, these students had come to maturity under democracy, unlike their predecessors who lived with the fear of repression and were unable to openly organize. As an editorial in *RBP* writes: “Estos estudiantes no tienen el trauma de los adultos con el conflicto social, pero fundamentalmente son la más clara expresión de la desigualdad social que hoy

¹⁵⁷ Hüne, Reed, and Zúñiga, “Tras 22 Días de Toma.”

¹⁵⁸ Olivares and Raúl Fuentes, “Después de tres semanas de movilizaciones: Sólo algunos liceos ‘rebeldes’ No reanudarán hoy las clases,” *El Mercurio*, June 13, 2006.

¹⁵⁹ Tilly and Tarrow, *Contentious Politics*, 130.

padecemos y que ha sido generada por el modelo educativo y económico.”¹⁶⁰ Out of this generational fearlessness, Cummings argues that students had formed a “collective identity that united students and motivated them to take protest action.”¹⁶¹

This collective student identity and infrastructural support enabled the movement’s success. As Tarrow explains, “[c]ontention crystallizes challenges into a social movement when it taps into embedded social networks and connective structures and produces vivid collective action frames and supportive identities able to sustain contention against powerful opponents.”¹⁶² Part of a “*generación sin miedo*,” these secondary students embraced this politicized identity to place demands upon the state.

This generational theory alone cannot explain why protests emerged under Bachelet, however. Her promises for greater participation created a political opening that invited students to engage with the state in ways not seen during the previous Concertación administrations. Given this opportunity, students pressed for bottom-up participation, rejecting her more limited offer for negotiations with the leadership. Donoso writes: “The rise of the Pingüinos provided an excellent opportunity to scrutinize whether the government would keep its promise and put Bachelet’s ‘bottom-up’ discourse into practice.”¹⁶³ As students quickly realized, her vision for participation was confined to technocratic negotiations expressly designed to limit student input. In response, they crafted their own vision of what political participation should look like, forcing the state to address their agenda.

¹⁶⁰ “Editorial: La historia es nuestra y la hacen los estudiantes,” *RBP* (no month indicated, 2006).

¹⁶¹ Cummings, “Democracy and Student Discontent,” 64.

¹⁶² Tarrow, *Power in Movement*, 33.

¹⁶³ Donoso, “Dynamics of Change in Chile,” 21.

If the Penguin Revolution represented the reawakening of the student movement, it did have its limitations. For example, unlike some of its predecessors, it never made an effort to engage with the popular classes. Even though the demands of the mobilization were based on familial grievances, the movement was largely confined to the schools themselves. And though mainstream media attention brought the movement to the public's eyes, the students failed to capitalize on this and mobilize civil society more broadly. Matilde Méndez del Canto, who served as the general secretary of the FECh in 2017, describes the movement's shortcomings:

[E]n 2006 tuvo harta cobertura, pero... era sólo de los estudiantes secundarios y la que se decía cuando participaron los profesores o participaron otras organizaciones es que se colgaban de los secundarios. Nunca parecía legítimo que participaran ningunos otros con los secundarios, entonces estaban muy aislados, que los universitarios tampoco eran parte del 2006, sólo los secundarios. Entonces por eso fue más agotado y no tuvo el alcance de todo el año. Fue relevante porque sí fue una gran movilización después de muchos años u organizada, etcétera, pero no fue en unidad con los otros actores, no lo fue.¹⁶⁴

Though the 2006 mobilizations failed to galvanize Chilean society, this would change in the next, even larger, wave of mobilizations in 2011.

¹⁶⁴ Interview, Matilde Méndez del Canto, July 27, 2017.

Chapter III

The Chilean Winter

Minutos antes de llegar a Alameda 1058, se escuchaba en la caravana “la toma va, la toma va”. Al llegar a la Alameda, la alternativa era una sola.... Algunos estudiantes trataron de abrir la puerta principal, otros se metieron por el patio que da a San Diego. Desde allí quebraron un vidrio para poder ingresar al edificio y abrir la puerta principal al centenar de personas que aguardaba en el frontis. Una vez abierta la puerta, la gente se agolpó para entrar. El hall de Casa Central se encontraba colmado de estudiantes que gritaban “Universidad de Chile, libre y gratis”. La Casa recibía con ecos a sus nuevos inquilinos.¹⁶⁵

RBP, July 2011

An enormous banner reading “educación pública gratuita y de calidad” hung from the bright yellow façade of the Casa Central of the University of Chile, the most emblematic university building in the country (See Figure 3:1). Students had occupied the building. This occupation, which would last from June through December 2011, was only one of hundreds of strikes and occupations that came to define the Chilean Winter. Calling for free, quality public education, university students once again brought education reform to the public’s attention.

Emerging five years after the Penguin Revolution, the Chilean Winter built upon the limited victories but successful tactics and demands of their predecessors. This time, however, university students took center stage and demanded sweeping educational reform. Moving beyond the concrete demands for free bus passes and university entrance exams, students called for a complete restructuring of their education system, reflecting broad discontent with Chile’s “neoliberal miracle.”

¹⁶⁵ Romina Reyes, “Toma de Casa Central: Única solución,” *RBP* (June 2011).



Figure 3:1
The cover page of an issue of *RBP* shows the Universidad de Chile's emblematic Casa Central *en toma*. Courtesy of the AFECh.

Through innovative tactics, such as flash mobs and other street interventions, the 2011 movement reached a much wider audience, bringing the popular classes into the fold and mobilizing millions of Chileans. While these mobilizations resonated with a broader public and also fed off momentum from coterminous environmental and indigenous movements, the

movement was not victorious. Mobilizing against Sebastián Piñera, Chile's first elected right-wing leader in over fifty years, students were brutally repressed and only achieved minor victories. Plummeting approval ratings for Piñera and rising approval ratings for the movement, however, reflected less tangible victories of the Chilean Winter (See Figure 3:2).

Once again, the student movement refocused national attention on education and the deepening inequalities of neoliberalism. And yet again, the movement fell prey to the cyclical nature of mobilizations, coming to a close with the onset of the summer vacation. This time, however, the movement reached an even greater audience and had a more enduring impact on the future of Chilean education.

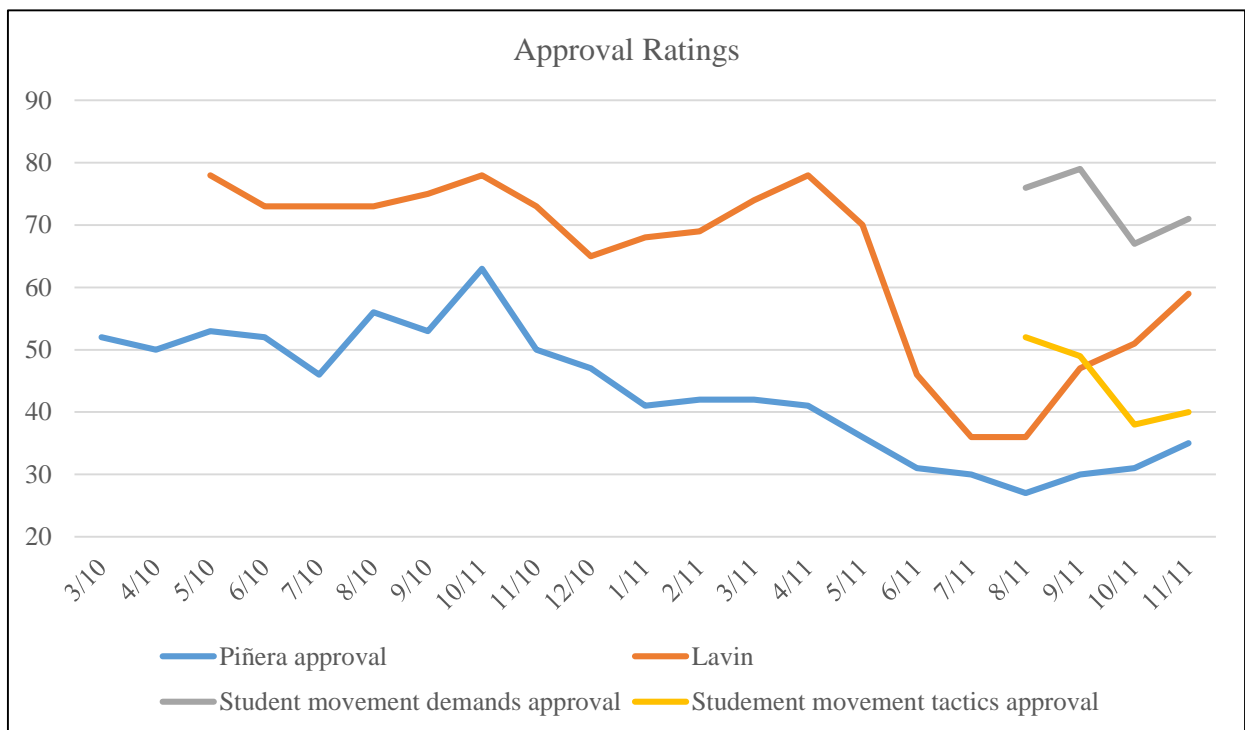


Figure 3:2
Approval ratings from March 2010 through November 2011. Data from Adimark GfK,
http://www.adimark.cl/estudios/documentos/011_ev_gob_nov011_.pdf.

Aftermath of the Penguin Revolution

A photograph of Bachelet holding hands and smiling alongside Minister of Education Yasna Provoste and members of La Alianza, Chile's right-wing coalition, provoked an uproar among students. Taken after government leaders sent the Ley General de Educación (LGE) to Parliament, this photograph both signified the end of the LOCE and the continuation of Pinochet's neoliberal education policies, the result of a bipartisan compromise.

The LGE came as a direct result of pressure from the Penguin Revolution to abolish the LOCE. However, the LGE, enacted in November 2009, did little to change Chilean education; rather, it allowed for gradual changes to the deeply entrenched neoliberal system. The law created stricter regulations for *particulares subvencionados*, private schools receiving state subsidies, and also mandated that high schools could only be supported by non-profit corporations.¹⁶⁶ Students expressed skepticism with the new proposal, arguing that private and subsidized high schools rebranded as “non-profit corporations” would not inhibit corporations from reaping profit from these institutions. An article in *RBP* stated: “Nuestra opinión es que simplemente el Estado no puede entregar dinero a empresas privadas, sino que debe dirigirlo a la educación pública. Si empresas privadas quieren lucrar, que lo hagan, pero pagando sus impuestos y sin usar recursos públicos.”¹⁶⁷ If the replacement of the LOCE indicated a victory for the 2006 student movement, the LGE did little to challenge Pinochet's profiteering model.

¹⁶⁶ Domedel and Peña y Lillo, *El mayo de los pingüinos*, 204.

¹⁶⁷ Giorgio Boccardo and Felipe Hazbún, “Ley general de Educación (LGE): ¿Por qué no celebramos?,” *RBP* (May 2007).

After 2006, protests revolved around the LGE and the Concertación's piecemeal reforms. As Patricia "Paty" Ibarra Sánchez, an UPLA alumna who entered university in 2006, recalls:

[S]eguimos haciendo crítica porque la reforma si bien se reformó, pero nosotros decimos que "la LOCE maquillada." Solo se cambiaron algunos aspectos de forma, pero no de fondo...Y que después nosotros eso lo utilicemos como argumento en 2011 porque...se sigue viendo la educación como una educación de mercado.¹⁶⁸

Referring to the LGE as the "LOCE with makeup," Ibarra echoes other criticism challenging the limited scope of this reform.

Throughout 2007, protests also began to address issues that affected the popular classes. In particular, students mobilized around the premature implementation of the Transantiago, Santiago's public transportation system. Partially owned by private operators, the Transantiago was considered a fiasco due to its long waits and poor services. Students demonstrated an understanding that this was an issue that affected not just themselves, but the broader society. In an article advertising a march on April 4, *RBP* wrote, "creemos que no será posible salir de esta crisis si no se incluye la opinión del mundo social, sector que casi en su totalidad es usuario del Transantiago."¹⁶⁹ Posters advertising this march depict a penguin, the emblem of the 2006 movement, straddling a Transantiago bus, its arm in the air in an act of defiance (See Figure 3:3). Demanding "más dignidad y menos negocio privado en el

¹⁶⁸ Interview, Patricia Ibarra Sánchez, January 15, 2018.

¹⁶⁹ "La Fech llama a movilizarse por un sistema de transporte público," *RBP* (April 2007).

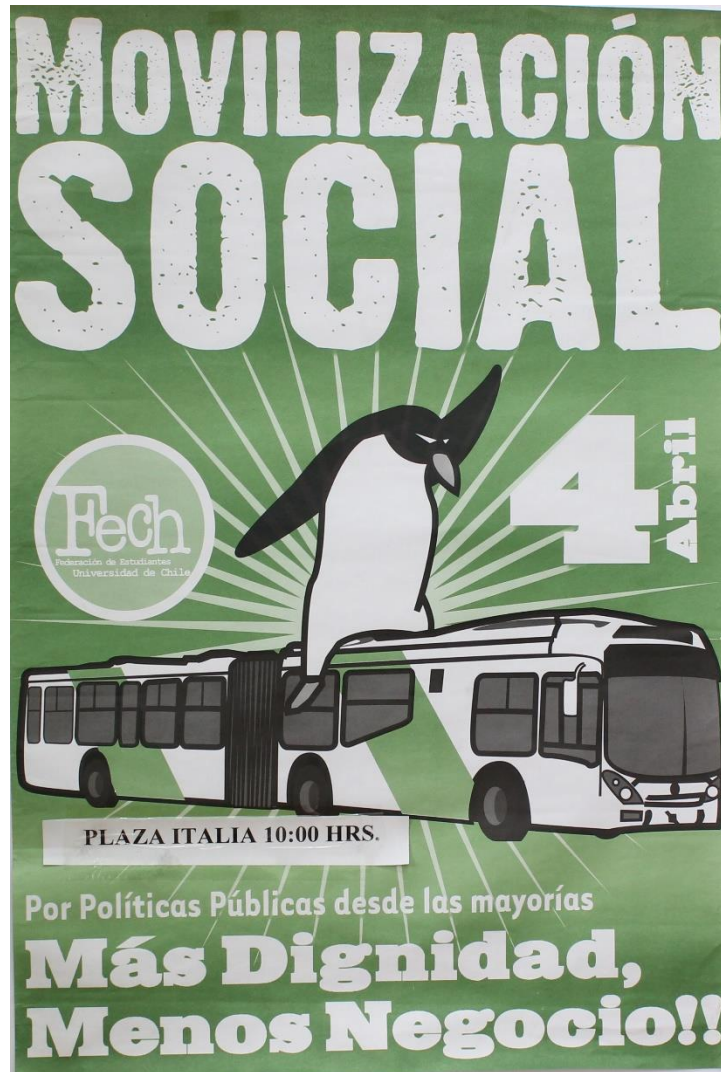


Figure 3:3
Poster advertising a march on April 4, 2007,
against the Transantiago. Courtesy of the AFECh.

transporte,” students sought to incorporate broader societal demands into the movement while fighting against the privatization of social services.

Although students continued to protest the Transantiago, the LGE, and the precarious state of the education system, these protests failed to receive the same traction as the 2006 protests for several reasons. First, many of the organizational structures that supported the Penguin Revolution had disintegrated after 2006. Additionally, most of the leaders had

graduated and entered university, many of them leaving behind their activist careers. Finally, protests from 2007-2010 failed to receive the same media attention that the 2006 mobilizations garnered, largely because they were unable to mobilize the same magnitude of students. Towards the end of 2010, however, mounting pressure from other social movements and the election of Piñera would bring the student movement to the forefront of Chilean society once again.¹⁷⁰

Precursor to the Chilean Winter

On February 27, 2010, an earthquake and tsunami struck the central coast of Chile. This 8.8 earthquake, the second largest in Chile's history, devastated coastal communities and cities and claimed over 500 lives. Bachelet, nearing the end of her term, came under fire for her inefficient relief efforts. In particular, she was hesitant to deploy troops in areas affected by the disaster, fearing that militarization would unearth traumas of the Pinochet era.¹⁷¹ Students rushed to fill the void created by the state, and, in turn, their relief efforts bolstered public support for their incipient movement.

Volunteer efforts had long been central foci of student federations since the founding of the FECh in 1906. In this instance, these efforts also served to strengthen student federations and lift them out of their dormant state. As Figueroa noted, “La reactivación del voluntariado, ahora como preocupación permanente...permitió ensayar formas de trabajo que

¹⁷⁰ A more in-depth examination of these protests is beyond the scope of this project. For a more extensive overview see, Brian Thomas Wiley, “The 2006 Penguin Revolution and the 2011 Chilean Winter: Chilean Students’ Fight for Education Reform,” (Master’s thesis, University of California, Santa Barbara, 2013).

¹⁷¹ Valeria Perasso, “El terremoto de Chile no pudo con la popularidad de Bachelet,” *BBC Mundo*, March 10, 2010, http://www.bbc.co.uk/mundo/economia/2010/03/100310_1001_chile_bachelet_gtg.shtml.

revivieron la participación estudiantil.”¹⁷² A poster for a protest organized by the Confech on July 1 illustrates the incorporation of earthquake relief into the movement’s platform (See Figure 3:4). A student holds a sign with a list of demands, among which reads “ayuda urgente del estado para los estudiantes damnificados por el terremoto.” University students’ response to this disaster thus reenergized the movement and imbued the university federations with a sense of communal solidarity that carried into 2011.

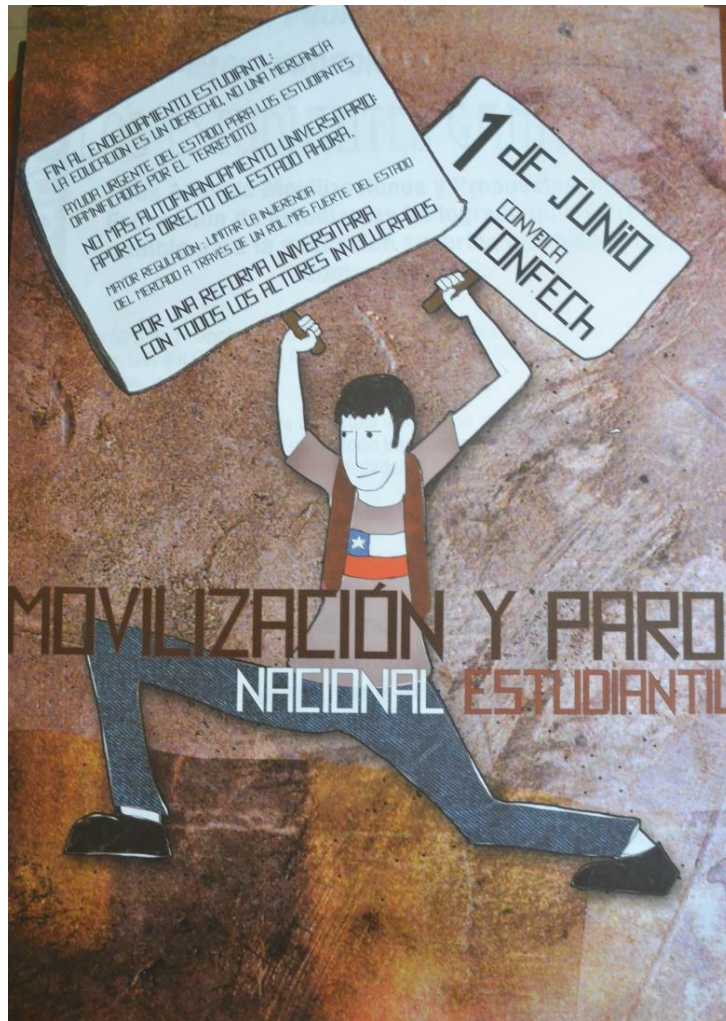


Figure 3:4
Poster for a march on June 1, 2010, incorporating demands following the 2010 earthquake that devastated central Chile. Courtesy of the AFECh.

¹⁷² Francisco Figueroa, *Llegamos para quedarnos: Crónicas de la revuelta estudiantil* (Santiago: LOM Ediciones), 25–26.

The Chilean Winter also drew momentum from environmental and indigenous protests in southern Chile. At the beginning of that year, proposals for decreased gas subsidies triggered unrest in Magallanes, Chile's southernmost region, leading to the seizure of the Punta Arenas airport and the paralysis of the city. In February, environmentalists and Mapuche communities mobilized against HidroAysén, a multinational hydroelectric project that posed significant threats to ecosystems and indigenous land rights. Activists blockaded roads and protested for several months. While these issues arose in the south, Santiaguinos mobilized around these issues, too, reflecting national opposition to the project.¹⁷³

Finally, public scrutiny around predatory lending further politicized civil society and drew attention to the disparate impacts of neoliberal policies. La Polar, a department store targeted at a lower-income clientele, came under fire for illegally refinancing customer loans at "exorbitant rates without credit holders' knowledge."¹⁷⁴ Del Campo argues that the controversy surrounding La Polar helped spark the 2011 mobilizations "as families were reminded of the dangers of consumer credit debt and the world of usury practices."¹⁷⁵ By early 2011, protests and calls for greater transparency fomented anti-government sentiment that the student movement would capitalize upon in the following months.

Mobilizing under a Right-Wing Presidency

In 2010, the billionaire Piñera of the Renovación Nacional won the presidency. A Harvard-educated businessman, Piñera was a fierce proponent of Pinochet's neoliberal

¹⁷³ Wiley, *The 2006 Penguin Revolution and the 2011 Chilean Winter*, 84.

¹⁷⁴ del Campo, "Theatricalities of Dissent," 179.

¹⁷⁵ del Campo, 180.

policies and supported further privatization. This political shift created a new opening for students, sparking a new cycle of contention.

Unlike Bachelet, who sought to subdue and co-opt the movement through negotiation, Piñera's regime was quick to repress. His administration witnessed increased police violence under the direction of the Minister of the Interior, Rodrigo Hinzpeter. Violence towards students and journalists became the norm in 2011 as militarized police forces sought to wrest control of the streets from the students. For their part, students became adept at dodging *guanacos* and coping with tear gas, which often filled the streets of Santiago and other cities. While this violence was largely targeted at students, bystanders were often caught in the crossfire. Piñera's administration also sought to decrease the movement's visibility by restricting the routes of marches, though students found ways to counter these measures. But students were not the only ones opposed to Piñera's rule. From February through August 2011, his approval ratings plummeted from 42% to just 27%, the lowest levels since the transition to civilian rule.¹⁷⁶

Student Leaders to Global Superstars

Similar to the Penguin Revolution, the leaders of the Chilean Winter played central roles in the mobilizations, though the latter garnered far more national and international media attention than their predecessors. The most famous leader was Vallejo, President of the FECh and a member of the Communist Party. Second in command was Francisco

¹⁷⁶ Adimark GfK, "Encuesta de opinión pública: Evaluación gestión del gobierno," November 2011, http://www.adimark.cl/estudios/documentos/011_ev_gob_nov011_.pdf.

Figueroa. Georgio Jackson, president of the FEUC and member of the Nueva Acción Universitaria (NAU) also was a key protagonist. These leaders became celebrities within Chile and also gained international prominence, riding on the wave of momentum from international social movements in 2011, such as Spain's *Indignados*, Occupy movements throughout the United States, and the Arab Spring. In October, Vallejo, Figueroa, and Jackson completed a six-day tour through Europe, where they received a hero's welcome from their peers. In the age of mass and social media, they became the faces of the Chilean Winter.

Vallejo in particular became the symbol of movement and the center of media attention. A poll in the *Guardian* named her "Person of the Year" and a journalist described her as "an eloquent and attractive young woman who exudes self-confidence and style."¹⁷⁷ The *New York Times* crowned her the "World's Most Glamorous Revolutionary," describing her as a "Botticelli beauty who wears a silver nose ring."¹⁷⁸ Many Chilean media outlets also sexualized Vallejo, often dedicating more print to her appearance than her politics. While it was Vallejo's politics and leadership, not her looks, that won her support within the movement, it is important to emphasize the differential media coverage she received compared to her male counterparts.

Although none of the leaders of the Penguin Revolution assumed protagonist roles in 2011, many of the leaders first became radicalized under the 2006 mobilizations. Most

¹⁷⁷ Jonathan Franklin, "Camila Vallejo – Latin America's 23-Year-Old New Revolutionary Folk Hero," *The Guardian*, October 8, 2011, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2011/oct/08/camila-vallejo-latin-america-revolutionary>.

¹⁷⁸ Francisco Goldman, "Camila Vallejo, the World's Most Glamorous Revolutionary," *The New York Times*, April 5, 2012, sec. Magazine, <https://www.nytimes.com/2012/04/08/magazine/camila-vallejo-the-worlds-most-glamorous-revolutionary.html>.

university students in 2011 were in high school during the Penguin Revolution; even if they had not participated actively in protests, they had at least come of age within that political climate.

Secondary students were also active in the 2011 movement, though they took a backseat to their elders. The Coordinadora Nacional de Estudiantes Secundarios (CONES) and ACES were active organizers of marches, and hundreds of high schools went on strike and occupied their schools for many months. However, these secondary students and organizations found themselves marginalized from the movement's leadership and often excluded from negotiations with the government.

Demands

What began as calls for the timely dispersal of stipends grew to three larger demands by the middle of the year: university financing reform; an end to for-profit education; and universal access to high-quality education. Over the course of the Chilean Winter, students began to zero in on their central demand and rallying cry of the movement: *educación gratuita*, or free public education. Unlike *arancel diferenciado*, *educación gratuita* demanded that the state restructure its higher education system rather than merely provide scholarships to the lower classes. This demand transcended the narrow focus of the Penguin Revolution. In doing so, students challenged the logic of the privatization of education, one of the pillars of Pinochet's neoliberal reforms.

According to Méndez, the movement was slow to incorporate calls for free education “porque creíamos que no había fuerza o creíamos que no había la convicción necesaria para

exigir una educación gratuita.” As the movement swelled, leaders grew more confident: “[L]uego la movilización fue muy grande, y ganó la tesis de la educación gratuita.”¹⁷⁹ To finance this costly reform, students proposed tax increases, decreased military spending, and the renationalization of the copper industry. It was not a question of whether or not free public education was possible, they contended. The state was financially capable of granting this demand, but they had chosen not to do so. Similar to the Penguin Revolution, which expanded its demands to broader structural critiques with increased momentum, the Chilean Winter also relied upon growing support to push for a more ambitious agenda.

Chronology of the Movement

While some scholarship puts May as the onset of the 2011 movement, it is necessary to look back a few more months.¹⁸⁰ At the end of March, students and academics at the Universidad Central, a private university in Santiago, protested the sale of the university to a for-profit company with ties to Concertación politicians. The attempted sale of La Central, they argued, represented the “colusión institucionalizada entre mercaderes y politicos,” as well as the marketization of education, or the granting of control of education to market forces.¹⁸¹ On April 4, students and faculty declared an indefinite strike. Later that week, 800 students marched towards the Ministry of Education. While this march received scant media

¹⁷⁹ Interview, Méndez, July 27, 2017.

¹⁸⁰ An interactive mapping website, “Cartografía de la movilización estudiantil,” is an excellent visual representation of Santiago protests in 2011. The website lets the user move through 2011 day by day, clicking on geo-located symbols that represent marches, *tomas*, *paros*, and other demonstrations. Each symbol on the map contains photos or links to news articles. This map shows both the reach of the movement in greater Santiago as well as its denouement. “Cartografía de la movilización estudiantil,” accessed March 10, 2018, <http://cartografiadelamovilizacion.cl/>.

¹⁸¹ Figueroa, *Llegamos para quedarnos*, 50.

coverage, “despertó la atención de los estudiantes de otras casas de estudio,”¹⁸² bringing the issue of for-profit education to students’ and public attention.

Mobilizations at the Universidad Central also represented a significant departure from the typical middle class movement as these protests were led by lower-income, first-generation private school students. Figueroa describes the impact that this changing demographic had on the movement:

No era la Resistencia de los hijos de la vieja clase media a la pérdida de beneficios ni tampoco la rabia existencial de grupúsculos sobreideologizados. Se trataba de estudiantes de títulos atados a las tasas de interés de créditos usureros, cuyo sueño de ser la primera generación de su familia en ingresar a la universidad pendía de la codicia, gestionada por el Estado, de bancos y casas comerciales.¹⁸³

For less well-off students, private universities that accepted lower PSU scores were often their only option. To attend these universities, however, they had to take out loans and incur significant debt. For-profit institutions and their adverse impact on students of lesser means thus became a central focus of the movement.

The Confech hesitated, however, to welcome private students to the federation for two reasons. First, traditional university students often looked down upon private students, reflecting a classist elitism. Additionally, many students feared that accepting these universities would legitimate Chile’s for-profit schools. For Figueroa and students from the Izquierda Autónoma, however, the incorporation of private university students into the

¹⁸² Figueroa, 51.

¹⁸³ Figueroa, 67–68.

movement “[s]ignificaba ampliar la alianza social y golpear un nicho de negocios sostenidos con subvenciones del Estado.”¹⁸⁴ Private school participation thus expanded both the movement’s composition and targets.

Mobilizations reached the Universidad de Chile following the delayed dispersal of scholarships and stipends from the Junta Nacional de Auxilio Escolar y Becas (JUNAEB). In response, students decided to occupy JUNAEB offices on April 14 to “denunciar la raíz del asunto: el encarecimiento y la precarización de la educación producto de su mercantilización.”¹⁸⁵ They were joined by similar occupations in other cities, prompting the resignation of María Teresa Ross, the JUNAEB’s director.

Following this modest victory, the Confech declared national mobilizations on April 28 and May 12. As Méndez explained:

[H]icimos una marcha nacional luego de esta manifestación pequeña el 28 de abril y ahí fue donde nosotros como equipo de comunicaciones dijimos ya, aquí era todos los estudiantes porque es un tema de las becas, que no es tan político, pero si puede ser accesible.¹⁸⁶

Leaders realized that even though this was a relatively apolitical issue, it would still garner mass support. Despite an increasingly tense political climate, the April 28 demonstration saw low turnout, with estimates of seven to nine thousand students in the streets of Santiago.¹⁸⁷

¹⁸⁴ Figueroa, 52.

¹⁸⁵ Figueroa, 54.

¹⁸⁶ Interview, Méndez del Canto.

¹⁸⁷ Boris Taikin C., “Marchas estudiantiles convocaron a más de 7 mil personas y terminaron solo con incidentes aislados,” *La Tercera*, April 28, 2011.

The May 12 march was notably stronger, drawing 50,000, according to *El Mercurio* and Vallejo (though Figueroa estimated a much smaller figure, 15,000). This number also included members of the Colegio de Profesores, Agrupación Nacional de Empleados Fiscales, and the CUT. As expected, *El Mercurio* was quick to highlight isolated incidents of violence, noting that there were 53 arrests in Santiago and 85 in other regions throughout the country. Below the paper's headline, a quote from Minister of Education Joaquín Lavín read: ““Los más desprotegidos y que tienen menos becas no estaban en la calle.””¹⁸⁸ According to Lavín, it was not the most disadvantaged students from professional and technical institutions who led this march. Rather, the FECh and other universities belonging to the Consejo de Rectores¹⁸⁹ took charge.

Although this protest was still relatively small, especially in comparison with future demonstrations, it was successful because it was “la primera en poner una agenda estudiantil sobre la mesa y en interpelar a La Moneda para que diera una respuesta.”¹⁹⁰ By this point, students decided to pursue three objectives: equal access to education, which included the abolition of the PSU; increased financing based on family income; and democratization.¹⁹¹ Even as the movement solidified its demands following this march, it still lacked a broader vision. Their demands, for instance, did not yet include free education, but rather scholarships for the lowest three quintiles and an *arancel diferenciado* for the upper two.¹⁹²

¹⁸⁸ Equipo de Crónica y Regiones, “Marchas de la Confech culminaron con 138 detenidos en todo el país: 50 mil universitarios salen a las calles y Educación pone acento en alumnos técnicos,” *El Mercurio*, May 13, 2011.

¹⁸⁹ El Consejo de Rectores de la Universidades de Chile (CRUCH) is an organizing body created in 1954 and is currently composed of 27 of the most prestigious public and private universities. More information on the CRUCH can be found at <http://consejoderectores.cl/inicio>.

¹⁹⁰ Figueroa, *Llegamos para quedarnos*, 59.

¹⁹¹ CONFECCH, “Convocatoria movilización y paro nacional,” *Scribd*, accessed February 28, 2018, <https://www.scribd.com/document/54542995/Convocatoria-12-Mayo>.

¹⁹² Figueroa, *Llegamos para quedarnos*, 57.

Spurred by demands for institutional improvement, numerous schools began *tomas* following the May 12 protest. These *tomas* and the preceding marches sought to pressure Piñera to address students' grievances during his annual speech on May 21, much as students had mobilized in advance of Bachelet's 2006 address. Students also marched in Valparaíso on the day of his speech, as had become customary. Following Piñera's address, students realized "que en realidad no había nada para el movimiento estudiantil. No había ni siquiera un peso más destinado a los recursos de la educación en Chile."¹⁹³ Frustrated by the President's failure to acknowledge their demands, several thousand students marched in Santiago and Valparaíso on May 26. Students delivered a letter to Piñera, expressing their disapproval and declaring an ultimatum that a failure to address their demands would trigger an indefinite national strike beginning on June 1.

Piñera countered with his own letter, indicating his willingness to engage in dialogue and also stressing that students at private universities and *centros de formación técnica* "deben sentarse a conversar con nosotros."¹⁹⁴ By this point, students had expanded their demands to reflect a more coherent ideological vision: "[E]l aumento del financiamiento público a las instituciones públicas y del CRUCH, quebrando así la lógica de concentrar los recursos en el subsidio a la demanda; el fin del endeudamiento de las familias, y la prohibición efectiva del lucro."¹⁹⁵ While the demands were still focused exclusively on issues affecting the university, for the first time, they reflected a greater critique of the underlying neoliberal logic and the ways that for-profit education affected families.

¹⁹³ Interview, Ibarra Sánchez.

¹⁹⁴ C. Urquiera, M.E. Pérez, and A. Guerrero, "6.000 estudiantes se movilizan en Santiago y Valparaíso y preparan paro nacional," *La Tercera*, May 27, 2011.

¹⁹⁵ Figueroa, *Llegamos para quedarnos*, 62.

In an attempt to undercut the planned June 1 demonstrations, the government convened a meeting with the Confech. Figueroa describes the government's reasoning behind their offer:

Lavín buscaba sacarse de encima el estigma de autoridad inflexible y dejar la pelota de nuestro lado, pensando que si accedíamos comenzaría la canalización institucional del conflicto y el retroceso de las movilizaciones, y que si rechazábamos su invitación quedaríamos ante la opinión pública como intransigentes interesados únicamente en complicarle la marcha al Gobierno.

In this way, the administration sought to enhance its public image and show students to be inflexible and unwilling to engage in negotiation. Students, however, accepted this invitation, although they dismissed it as simply “una reunión para los medios,”¹⁹⁶ or a publicity stunt.

Throughout June, hundreds of universities and high schools mounted *tomas*. On June 9, students at the Universidad de Chile spontaneously occupied the Casa Central. That night, close to 500 students slept there. By early June, students occupied 26 schools. This number would grow to nearly 140 schools in Santiago alone by the end of July.¹⁹⁷ During the Chilean Winter, hundreds of school occupations across the country generated momentum and successfully applied pressure on the Piñera administration. *Tomas* served as important spaces for collective identity formation and education. At night, students set up camp in classrooms and hallways. During the day, they rolled up their sleeping bags and held meetings, prepared for marches, and held cultural activities.

¹⁹⁶ Figueroa, 64.

¹⁹⁷ Cesar Guzman-Concha, “The Students’ Rebellion in Chile: Occupy Protest or Classic Social Movement?” *Social Movement Studies* 11, no. 3–4 (August 2012): 3.

Luis “Lucho” Gallardo Cochifas, a student at PUCV, recounted his experience living in the *toma* of the university’s Casa Central for several months. Serving on the kitchen crew, Gallardo spoke to the mostly disciplined nature of the *toma*, efforts to preserve cleanliness, and vigilance against possible infiltration. But he also addressed internal tensions and the difficulty of maintaining the occupation over the course of several months. Towards the end of the takeover, exhaustion and police repression dealt a blow to the occupation: “Al final de la toma, ya empezó a disminuir.... Disminuyó mucho. Había cansancio, un poco de desesperanza, frustración, nos había chocado un poco igual la realidad. En un momento Hinzpeter...fue malo. El de verdad nos recordaba mucho una figura dictatorial.”

Six years later, Gallardo waxed nostalgic about his experience. “En toda la universidad es el momento en que más he aprendido cosas, el momento que ha sido más motivador, lo más trascendente.” He also reflected upon the collective identity forged within the *toma*: “compartimos todo. El sueño, el hambre, el frío, la comida, el miedo de los pacos [pólice], la rabia por los pacos.”¹⁹⁸ Careful not to over-romanticize his experience, though, Gallardo’s memories from the *toma* encapsulate both the excitement and power of the *toma*, as well as the difficulties of maintaining a sustained occupation over the course of the Chilean Winter.

One of the largest marches occurred on June 16, with an estimated 80,000 protestors in Santiago and another 80,000 throughout the rest of the country. While some sources claim that this had been the largest march since the return of democracy, other mobilizations during the Penguin Revolution witnessed similar turnouts. Reflecting on the march, however,

¹⁹⁸ Interview, Luis Gallardo Cochifas, August 10, 2017.

Figueroa notes that it lacked political unity, with public and private students, secondary school students, professors, and other educators all articulating different demands.

Lavín responded to this march with another letter that included slightly modified proposals. These, he hoped, would “sirven de base para la creación de una mesa de trabajo que permita normalizar las actividades académicas y que en un plazo de 90 días contribuya a enfrentar los temas planteados y a buscar consensos respecto a aquellas materias que deberá decidir el Congreso Nacional.”¹⁹⁹ This letter was intended to placate the public by demonstrating the great efforts the government was willing to go to reach an accord. Not surprisingly, a wary Confech rejected this offer, announcing a national strike for June 30.

Hoping to break the movement in anticipation of the scheduled strike, Lavín declared an early start to winter vacation on June 28. While he declared that his motivation was to “save” the school year, this was quite clearly a strategic, if cynical, maneuver to undermine strikes and demobilize the movement. Lavín’s announcement had little impact, as the majority of schools continued in *paros* or *toma*.

By this point, Lavín had begun meeting with the Consejo de Rectores in a clear attempt to skirt negotiations with students and co-opt the movement. The day after Lavín’s decision to begin vacation early, the Consejo de Rectores rejected the government’s latest set of proposals, setting off the June 30 mobilization. Estimates for the march’s turnout vary by source: *La Tercera* reported over 80,000 students in Santiago, while Figueroa optimistically declared 200,000 in Santiago and another 180,000 in other cities. Furthermore, while Figueroa contends that the protest gathered a diverse crowd, Lavín countered that it was

¹⁹⁹ Joaquín Lavín, “Carta dirigida a la mesa ejecutiva de la Confech,” Santiago, 21 de junio, 2011, quoted in Figueroa, *Llegamos para quedarnos*, 109.

largely composed of the usual university students, and not private school students most affected by the crisis. As Lavín stated: “[C]reo que los dirigentes se politizaron, pero la ciudadanía no. Desde que se produjo este giro, dejé de hablarles a grupos específicos y empecé a dirigirme a la opinión pública con más claridad.”²⁰⁰ Denouncing the protest as unrepresentative of the greater public, Lavín sought to delegitimize the movement.

Although Lavín did not outwardly condemn the demonstrations, he dismissed the utility of the marches and insisted on the need for dialogue.

Las puertas de este ministerio seguirán abiertas, pero no voy a caer en la ingenuidad de abrimme a estudiar un tema cuando al día siguiente los estudiantes lo desechan y vuelven con una nueva artillería de exigencias que están totalmente fuera de mi alcance. Siempre he estado dispuesto a conversar los temas que realmente están relacionados con la educación. Lo que no se puede hacer es mezclar las legítimas demandas con exigencias políticas e ideológicas.²⁰¹

This approach mirrored Bachelet’s response five years earlier. Such statements painted students as irrational and limited acceptable negotiations to the confines of the Ministry.

The government announced another proposal on July 5, this time coming in a televised address from Piñera himself. Among the concessions of the Gran Acuerdo Nacional por la Educación (GANE) were the creation of the Fondo para Educación, increased scholarships for technical and professional universities, increased scholarships for the two lowest quintiles, and a decreased interest rate for the CAE. While Piñera presented this as a “great”

²⁰⁰ Figueroa, 113; “Joaquín Lavín: ‘Los que marcharon no representan a todos los estudiantes,’” *La Tercera*, July 1, 2011, <http://diario.latercera.com/edicionimpresa/joaquin-lavin-los-que-marcharon-no-representan-a-todos-los-estudiantes/>.

²⁰¹ “Joaquín Lavín.”

new proposal, Figueroa notes, “[n]o había nada que Lavín no hubiese prometido antes. Lo que el Gobierno pretendía era revertir el alto rechazo social que venía recibiendo su gestión y la presión política en que eso se traducía, corrigiendo la idea de que no estaba haciendo nada por solucionar el conflicto y mejorar la educación.”²⁰² Furthermore, Piñera’s proposal did not agree to put an end to profiteering. By reintroducing past proposals, the government sought to placate the movement and paint itself as conciliatory to turn public opinion against students.

In the introduction to his speech, Piñera proclaimed: “Ya es tiempo terminar con las tomas y las protestas y recuperar los caminos del diálogo y los acuerdos.”²⁰³ In this way, Piñera pitted students and families against each other, demonizing those who chose to mobilize as indifferent to their classmates’ education. This statement also echoed Lavín’s earlier statements that created a binary between protest and negotiation, signaling deliberations as the only appropriate option. Later in his speech, Piñera defended private education and the right to school choice, reaffirming his commitment to “protegiendo el derecho de ellos y sus familias a elegir libremente la institución en que quieren estudiar.”²⁰⁴ For Piñera and the political class, education was a consumer good, not a right.

In an attempt to reach an agreement with the Consejo de Rectores, who by this point served as intermediaries with Piñera’s administration, the Confech put forth a proposal on July 12, the Acuerdo Social por la Educación. According to Vallejo, the central tenets of this

²⁰² Figueroa, *Llegamos para quedarnos*, 116–17.

²⁰³ NYCKATV, “Presidente Sebastian Piñera respuesta a estudiantes 5 julio 2011,” YouTube, 2011, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wJO90OM_r84.

²⁰⁴ “President Piñera convoca a un Gran Acuerdo Nacional por la Educación,” *Emol*, July 5, 2011, <http://www.emol.com/noticias/nacional/2011/07/05/490990/presidente-pinera-convoca-a-un-gran-acuerdo-nacional-por-la-educacion.html>.

hoped-for agreement, in line with the movement's demands, were: "[P]oner fin al lucro en todo el sistema educacional, la desmunicipalización sin privatización y, además, avanzar hacia un sistema nacional de educación pública de calidad y gratuito." As Nataly Espinoza, president of the student federation of the PUCV, expressed, the Consejo de Rectores attempted to co-opt the movement in order to reach an agreement with the government. "Hay que recordar que este movimiento lo ha levantado la comunidad universitaria, los estudiantes en las calles, los profesores, los trabajadores, donde, en definitiva, los rectores están tratando de utilizarnos como un bono de término de conflicto con el gobierno y eso nos parece erróneo."²⁰⁵

As they awaited a response, students began an unauthorized march on July 14 from Plaza Italia, the traditional starting point of marches. Students estimated 100,000 people in attendance, but *El Mercurio* offered a much smaller crowd size of 30,000. Isolated violence caused by *encapuchados* ended in 62 arrests and 10 serious police injuries. As usual, *El Mercurio*'s coverage emphasized the violence and damages, rather than the students' tactics or demands.²⁰⁶

Following this march and in response to steadily decreasing approval ratings,²⁰⁷ Piñera shuffled around his cabinet, replacing Lavín with Felipe Bulnes. Additionally, Piñera replaced his Minister of Mining and Energy, likely in response to protests led by environmental and indigenous activists in the south.²⁰⁸ These changes were a major victory

²⁰⁵ C. Araya and T. Meruane, "Confech convoca a masiva marcha y espera respuesta de rectores para acuerdo," *La Tercera*, July 14, 2011, <http://diario.latercera.com/edicionimpresa/confech-convoca-a-masiva-marcha-y-espera-respuesta-de-rectores-para-acuerdo/>.

²⁰⁶ "Marcha estudiantil se toma La Alameda y termina con violentos incidentes," *El Mercurio*, July 15, 2011, <http://diario.elmercurio.com/2011/07/15/nacional/nacional/noticias/0FC5E32D-1C0F-4DF4-B97C-28A82860BDAE.htm?id=%7b0FC5E32D-1C0F-4DF4-B97C-28A82860BDAE%7d>.

²⁰⁷ By July, Piñera's approval ratings had dropped to 30%, according to Adimark.

²⁰⁸ Wiley, *The 2006 Penguin Revolution and the 2011 Chilean Winter*, 97.

for the students: after three months of mobilization, they successfully had ousted two key cabinet members.

Tactics

The Chilean Winter distinguished itself from earlier mobilizations through its innovative tactics which caught the public eye and brought attention to the movement's demands. Interspersed with marches, *paros*, and *tomas* were a mélange of flash mobs, street theater, and other forms of public intervention that “rompían con el esquema de un día normal en la ciudad,”²⁰⁹ according to one student. These actions changed the mood of the protests, captured media and public attention, and leveled criticisms against the neoliberal order through the creative use of urban space and bodies.

For example, on June 13, theater students at the Universidad de Chile began running laps around La Moneda, the presidential palace (See Figure 3:5). These students relayed for 1,800 hours, or 75 days, without stopping, symbolizing the 1,800 million pesos that the state would need to finance free public education. According to one of the organizers, “estamos conscientes de que la plata para financiar la educación pública está, pero lo que no hay es voluntad por parte de los políticos. Esa misma voluntad es la que nos hace estar acá día y

²⁰⁹ Interview, Valentina Núñez Pascual, August 8, 2017.



Figure 3:5

Students running around La Moneda as part of “1800 horas por la educación.” This action lasted from June 13-August 26, 2011.
<http://www.lacuarta.com/noticia/terminaron-las-1800-horas-por-la-educacion/>.

noche y que queremos despertar en la clase política.”²¹⁰ Not only did this action require immense physical dedication, but it also necessitated round-the-clock logistical support. A video of the action shows students running around La Moneda day and night. Laps were meticulously logged in a record book, and organizers waited on the sidewalk with sandwiches, Gatorade, and banana smoothies for runners.²¹¹ Combining an innovative stunt that literally circled the president’s palace with the symbolism of 1,800 hours, the action simultaneously disrupted public space and engaged with the public while presenting a pointed political critique.

²¹⁰ Rocío Pérez Ruz and Loreto Contreras, “1800 horas corriendo por la educación: Mientras arriba se corren, abajo corren,” *RBP*, (August 2011).

²¹¹ Periódico *La Pulenta*, “[Reportaje] Corriendo 1800 Horas Por La Educación,” YouTube, 2011, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fG2-55FH7k4>.

Following a similar line of logic, YouTube videos from Antofagasta show students engaging in an 1,800 second *besatón*, or kiss-in, on July 6. Couples kissed with signs reading “con pasión por la educación” (“with passion for education”) or “¡Enamorada pero seriamente endeudada!” (“in love but seriously indebted!”), while a recording of *Titanic*’s “My Heart Will Go On” played in the background.²¹² Santiago also witnessed a *besatón* that same evening.

Perhaps one of the most popular street demonstrations was a massive “Thriller” flashmob in front of La Moneda on June 24 (See Figure 3:6). Several hundred medical students dressed as zombies to represent the dying state of Chilean education.²¹³ The zombies represented the reawakening of the victims of neoliberalism, rising out of their tombs to



Figure 3:6
“Thriller” flash mob held in front of La Moneda on June 25, 2011.
<http://foros.fotech.cl/topic/196320-debate-protestas-estudiantiles-mas-creativas-y-culturales-zque-opinas-de-esta-nueva-forma-de-protestar>.

²¹² cl89ful, “Besatón Nacional Por La Educación - Antofagasta, Chile - 06/07/2011 - 1a Parte,” YouTube, 2011, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DtutCKHOGiQ>.

²¹³ Carlos Hansen, “Massive Thriller Dance Chile Santiago 24/06/2011,” YouTube, 2011, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vDRINm7411Y>.

challenge the established order. As del Campo argues, “[i]nvading the neoliberal city and the world of the living, the medical student zombies threatened to sully the aseptic veneer of the Chilean miracle.”²¹⁴

Another flash mob held in the Plaza de Armas on July 18 featured students dressed as superheroes fighting for public education. A booming voice interrupted acrobatic stunts and stage combat, announcing: “Tienen algo mucho más importante por que luchar. Su educación pública, el pilar de la sociedad está siendo cruelmente debilitada y está al punto de desaparecer.”²¹⁵ In response to this rallying cry, students erupted in a choreographed flash mob. Putting aside individual disputes between superheroes and villains, the troupe came together to collectively fight for their public education.

A final example of innovative street theatre was “Una playa para Lavín,” held in the Plaza de Armas on July 5 (See Figure 3:7). Hundreds of people stripped down to their bathing suits in the middle of the Chilean winter, pulling out towels, umbrellas, and other beach paraphernalia. Held the week after Lavín declared an early start to vacation, this undermined his efforts to combat student strikes. Additionally, the scene expressly mocked an urban beach that Lavín had created for underprivileged children during his tenure as mayor of Santiago.²¹⁶

²¹⁴ del Campo, “Theatricalities of Dissent,” 187.

²¹⁵ CanalFech, “Superheroes y Villanos Por La Educacion (Flashmob),” YouTube, 2011, https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=3&v=QM-_QO0V2mI.

²¹⁶ Artemio Espinosa Mc., “Chile Mobs - Vamos a La Playa!!! Por La Educación,” YouTube, 2011, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KLb3skOsaZc>; and *teleSUR tv*, “Recrean Playa En Chile En Protesta Contra Joaquín Lavín,” YouTube, 2011, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9bly7R-kPiI>.



Figure 3:7
 “Playa para Lavín,” a winter beach scene held on July 5, 2011,
 in protest of Lavín’s decision to begin winter vacation early.
[http://terremoto.mx/article/street-performativities-student-movements-
 political-action-and-the-culture-industry/](http://terremoto.mx/article/street-performativities-student-movements-political-action-and-the-culture-industry/).

Beyond attracting media attention and involving the popular sector, these public interventions also challenged notions of urban space within the neoliberal city. These demonstrations, del Campo argues, “reappropriated the neoliberal city—segregated, atomized, and consumption-driven— and transformed it momentarily into a counter-neoliberal/counterhegemonic space, where a community of collective participation, marked by solidarity and the promotion of social change, emerged.”²¹⁷ Occupying public space, students reappropriated city streets and promoted a collective identity. This logic even extended to *besatones*, as students engaged publicly in acts normally relegated to the private sphere: “Everyone who participated seemed to use his or her body, and the body of another, to perform in public—and collectively—an affective practice that is usually relegated to the

²¹⁷ del Campo, “Theatricalities of Dissent,” 178.

private and personal sphere; it was a way to defy the excessive privatization of shared experience.”²¹⁸ This critique of the neoliberal city went hand-in-hand with students’ attacks on the neoliberalization of education.

“Pacos, guanacos y lumas”²¹⁹ and State Repression

On August 3, Confech representatives, secondary students, and members of the Colegio de Profesores met with Hinzpeter, who had denied requests for a march permit along the Alameda. Despite Hinzpeter’s refusal, students decided to march there the following day. In anticipation of the march, the police placed more troops along the route, which students had barricaded that morning. High school students marched in the morning while university students took to the streets in the afternoon, revealing a lack of coordination, according to Figueroa. This was reflective of growing tensions between university and secondary students. A former spokeswoman for ACES later echoed this sentiment, admitting that the Confech “era súper conflictiva, fría y distante con los secundarios, sobre todo con la ACES.”²²⁰ The Confech also had excluded secondary leaders from the *mesas de diálogo* with the government, even as secondary students actively participated in the mobilizations.

Shortly after the morning march began, tear gas filled the air. The streets remained saturated with gas by the time university students started marching in the afternoon.

²¹⁸ del Campo, 189.

²¹⁹ A line from Chilean rapper Ana Tijoux’s song, “Shock,” which criticizes the State’s response to the movement and makes reference to Naomi Klein’s shock doctrine theory. *Pacos* is Chilean slang for the police; *guanacos* are the police vehicle described in the Introduction; and *lumas* translates to truncheons. The music video for Tijoux’s “Shock” includes footage from 2011 protests and *tomas*. National Records, “Ana Tijoux – Shock,” YouTube, 2011, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=177-s44MSVQ>.

²²⁰ Macarena Segovia, “Crónica de una jornada histórica que puso en jaque al Gobierno de Piñera: 4 de Agosto de 2011: El Día D del movimiento estudiantil,” *El Mostrador*, August 4, 2016, <http://www.elmostrador.cl/noticias/pais/2016/08/04/4-de-agosto-de-2011-el-dia-d-del-movimiento-estudiantil/>.

Unauthorized protests broke out throughout Chile, many of them ending in violence and police repression.²²¹ As students and police fought for control of the streets throughout the day, violence erupted on both sides. Later that evening, *encapuchados* sacked and burned La Polar, the store that had ignited protests earlier that year. This was not merely an act of senseless vandalism, however; by burning La Polar, *encapuchados* hoped to redirect public attention to the company's predatory actions.

As Ibarra explained in an interview, the day's events galvanized popular support for the movement. Excessive police repression generated:

[S]olidaridad con el movimiento estudiantil porque la gente entendió de que los jóvenes estaban decididos, que no era un juego de niños.... Entonces la gente empezó a apoyar al movimiento estudiantil y también empezó a tener temor de que se viniera una nueva militarización...un golpe militar o una guerra civil porque el nivel de represión le recordó de eso.²²²

She emphasized that while student leaders expected repression, it was much greater than anticipated. The use of excessive force invoked fear as it reminded older generations of the violence many had experienced under the dictatorship.

At 9 o'clock that night, *cacerolazos* rang out in Santiago and other cities as the popular classes banged pots and pans in support of the students. "La gente común y corriente sale a la calle a brindar su apoyo al movimiento estudiantil mediante golpes en ollas vacías, en sartenes, en cucharas de palo,"²²³ recounts an *RBP* article. *Cacerolazos*, as argued in

²²¹ "Jornada nocturna de 'cacerolazos' a lo largo del país: Concepción y Valparaíso vivieron las jornadas más violentas en regiones," *El Mercurio*, August 5, 2011.

²²² Interview, Ibarra Sánchez.

²²³ Carlos Fuentes G., "Las calles del 4 de agosto: Una manga de inútiles subversivos," *RBP* (August 2011).

Chapter 1, had been significant spatial interventions that represented the mobilization of the middle class women under Allende and later popular class mobilization in opposition to Pinochet's dictatorship. These *cacerolazos* were the first ones since the return to democracy, which del Campo argues "clearly associated Piñera's administration with the dictatorship."²²⁴

The following morning, the front page of *La Tercera*, a newspaper with a slightly less overt conservative slant than *El Mercurio*, highlighted the violence of the marches with a large picture of a street ablaze with the caption "Protestas tras prohibición de marcha causan violentos disturbios en Santiago." Below this headline, however, was another story that announced that Piñera's public approval ratings had plummeted to 26%, the lowest rating since 1989. As Paty explained, "la prensa solidarizó con el movimiento estudiantil, que creo que era lo único dio que lo hizo, ¿cachai? Y empezó una mostrada de los niveles de violencia...fue como un vuelto que yo creo que la prensa estuvo obligada a hacer."²²⁵ If the mainstream media still emphasized the movement's violence, it was at least beginning to document widespread public disapproval for the administration's tactics. Thus, increased repression in tandem with growing public support for the students contributed to making the August 4 demonstrations a watershed for the movement.

The Climax and Fall of the Chilean Winter

The second half of August saw two of the most significant marches of the Chilean Winter. The March of the Umbrellas, held on a rainy winter day on August 18, was less violent and repressive than previous ones, in part because students and authorities

²²⁴ del Campo, "Theatricalities of Dissent," 186.

²²⁵ Interview, Ibarra Sánchez.

compromised on the march's route. While this march had a smaller turnout, with estimates of around 50,000, it set the stage for the largest demonstration yet.

On August 21, hundreds of thousands joined in the *Marcha familiar por la educación*, a march and free festival in Parque O'Higgins. (Officials estimated 100,000 attendees, while students contended that the crowds were closer to a million.) What set this march apart was its composition; as its name suggests, this demonstration attracted families and people of all ages in a peaceful, carnivalesque day of action. Photos of the protest show grandparents marching with large banners and children holding signs atop parents' shoulders (Figure 3:9).²²⁶ Figueroa explains that “El objetivo era ofrecer una instancia de expresión a esas



Figure 3:8
“*Marcha familiar por la educación*,” held on August 21.
<http://archivo.elcomercio.pe/mundo/actualidad/fotos-marcha-familiar-educacion-congrega-cientos-miles-personas-chile-noticia-1111255>.

²²⁶ “Miles de personas se congregan en Parque O'Higgins por marcha familiar por la educación,” *Emol*, August 21, 2011, <http://www.emol.com/noticias/nacional/2011/08/21/499013/miles-de-personas-se-congregan-en-parque-ohiggins-por-marcha-familiar-por-la-educacion.html>.

miles de personas que desde sus casas y lugares de trabajo apoyaban pero no podían o no querían asistir a las marchas. Además queríamos desmarcarnos de los hechos de violencia que venían copando la discusión desde julio.”²²⁷ The familial composition of this protest capitalized on the movement’s favorable public approval and countered the mainstream media’s usually critical depiction of mobilizations.

Demonstrations organized in conjunction with the labor union also demonstrated popular class support for the movement. A two-day strike led by the CUT on August 24 and 25 epitomized this solidarity.²²⁸ Workers were clearly inspired by the students. Roberto Morales, a union leader, expressed: “Tenemos que seguir el ejemplo de los estudiantes. Nuestros hijos nos han enseñado que la lucha se consigue en la calle.”²²⁹ While the strike appeared to exemplify a harmonious relationship between the student and labor movements, Figueroa argues that there was tension surrounding this strike:

[V]eíamos este paro más como un peligro que como una oportunidad. Las cooptadas cúpulas sindicales de la CUT contaminarían la causa estudiantil con su desprestigio, además de abrir la puerta para que los intereses de la Concertación se aferraran—tras su estrepitoso fracaso en la trinchera estudiantil—a puestos de comando e intermediación de la movilización con el Estado.²³⁰

Students worried that the CUT’s presence in the movement would make it easier for authorities to co-opt the movement. Furthermore, the strike’s tone and tactics differed

²²⁷ Figueroa, *Llegamos para quedarnos*, 146.

²²⁸ Manuel Larrabure and Carlos Torchia, “The 2011 Chilean Student Movement and the Struggle for a New Left,” *Latin American Perspectives* 42, no. 5 (September 2015): 258, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0094582X14547506>.

²²⁹ La Primavera de Chile, “PARO NACIONAL JORNADA 24 DE AGOSTO 2011,” 2011, <https://vimeo.com/28671959>.

²³⁰ Figueroa, *Llegamos para quedarnos*, 148.

markedly from the students' protest: "[T]he strike had a bureaucratic character, lacking the creativity and audacity of the students, which shows some of the CUT's limits in supporting the student struggle up to this point."²³¹ Though the strike suggested intergenerational solidarity, especially as many of the striking workers were protesting alongside their children, it is important not to overstate the significance of this collaboration.

On August 25, the mood of the protest changed again and an extreme display of state violence garnered even greater support for the students. Police forces shot and killed Manuel Gutiérrez, a sixteen-year old innocently observing a *cacerolazo*. His death ignited further indignation towards the regime and attracted international criticism. While five police officers were dismissed following his death, neither police nor the Ministry of the Interior assumed full responsibility, claiming that it was an accidental and isolated incident.²³²

On September 3, Confech representatives met with Piñera for another round of negotiations. However, a plane crash on the previous night that killed Felipe Camiroaga, Chile's most popular news anchor, put a damper on media coverage and public support for the talks. Following this news, student leaders debated whether or not attend the negotiations, fearing that Piñera might not be in attendance.²³³ While Piñera was at the meeting, the administration ignored most of the students' proposals, refusing to budge on for-profit education and increased funding for public education. As Figueroa argues, participation in this negotiation may have bolstered public opinion, on the one hand, since it demonstrated students' willingness to engage in dialogue, but it also served to co-opt the movement.

²³¹ Larrabure and Torchia, "The 2011 Chilean Student Movement and the Struggle for a New Left," 258.

²³² Figueroa, *Llegamos para quedarnos*, 149.

²³³ Figueroa, 150. Ibarra echoed this somber mood on the morning of the negotiation.

Following this round of talks, the tone of the movement began to change. Marches throughout September saw much smaller turnout, mobilizing fewer than 20,000 people. The media was quick to capitalize on the small attendance, internal divisions within the movement, and general exhaustion within the Confech, suggesting that the movement was split between the *moderados* and *ultras*.²³⁴ To the government and media's surprise, however, students convened a massive mobilization on September 22, with organizers estimating around 150,000 in attendance in Santiago and 40,000 in other regions. An impassioned Vallejo optimistically declared: "Esta lucha va a seguir.... Nuestras demandas han llegado para quedarse. Hoy día el pueblo chileno despertó, está mirando hacia el futuro y quiere ser parte de ese futuro."²³⁵ Giorgio Jackson echoed this sentiment, stating that the movement "'que estaba supuestamente decaído, en realidad no lo estaba."²³⁶ Student leaders viewed this victory as a repudiation of media claims of a moribund movement.

This momentum proved short-lived, however. Throughout September and October, high schools and universities ended their *paros* and *tomas*, some voluntarily and others by force. As the academic year came to an end, the movement steadily lost steam. On October 3, Hinzpeter proposed the Ley Hinzpeter, which criminalized school occupations.²³⁷ Furthermore, *las mesas de diálogo* between the government and student leaders began to fracture.²³⁸

²³⁴ Figueroa, 154.

²³⁵ "Camila Vallejo tras marcha: 'Esta lucha va a seguir,'" *Emol*, September 22, 2011, <http://movimientoestudiantil.cl/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/22-de-septiembre-Camila-vallejo-esta-lucha-va-a.pdf>.

²³⁶ "Camila Velljo Tras Marcha: 'Esta Lucha va a Seguir.'"

²³⁷ Figueroa, *Llegamos para quedarnos*, 169; and Wiley, *The 2006 Penguin Revolution and the 2011 Chilean Winter*, 107.

²³⁸ Figueroa explains the *quebrada* of the negotiations, laying part of the blame on a secondary student who decided to walk out of a negotiation on October 5. Figueroa, 159.

Student leaders acknowledged that by the end of the year, the movement's novelty and the impact of nontraditional tactics had begun to wear off. Indefinite *paros* and *tomas* were no longer viable options for the mobilizations ahead. As Vallejo explained:

El paro indefinido, en su momento, fue necesario para todas las discusiones y actividades, y como presión a las autoridades.... El próximo año no se puede repetir. No podemos estar con seis o siete meses de paro todos los años. No podemos perder las clases, porque nos perjudica y perjudicamos también al país, no entregándole profesionales con buena formación. Sabemos que nuestras demandas son de largo plazo. En ese sentido, aspiramos a utilizar otra estrategia de movilización. Que podemos estar en clases y no perjudicar nuestra formación profesional, pero que también tengamos espacios institucionalizados de debate y de elaboración de propuestas.²³⁹

On December 18, students ended the *toma* at the Casa Central. By this point, however, only some of the most radical students remained in the building. While the return to classes and summer vacation effectively ended the mobilizations, the movement would reemerge in the near future, though the demonstrations were never of the same magnitude.

In December, Vallejo lost the FECh presidency by 189 votes to Gabriel Boric, indicating an important shift for the FECh and the student movement at large. Representing the Izquierda Autónoma, Boric had promised to distance the movement from traditional

²³⁹ Axel Pickett, "Camila Vallejo vicepresidenta de La Fech: 'No podemos estar con seis o siete meses de paro todos los años,'" *La Tercera*, December 11, 2011.

political parties, unlike Vallejo, whose membership in the Communist Party aligned the movement with partisan politics.

In an interview shortly after his election, Boric reflected upon some of the shortcomings of the past year's mobilization and the future direction of the movement:

La principal crítica que hacemos, porque también fuimos parte de él, fue el no haber fortalecido las alianzas con otros sectores sociales. Se debilitó la alianza con los secundarios. En este sentido, nuestro énfasis el próximo año será fortalecer los lazos y la organización, en conjunto con trabajadores, pobladores, secundarios y compañeros de las universidades privadas, y a todos los que quieran transformar este país.²⁴⁰

According to Boric, the movement's shortcoming was its inability to connect more broadly with other sectors of civil society. He emphasized the need to continue expanding the movement's base, arguing that the fight was not only for quality education, but rather the recomposition of democracy: "Tenemos que ampliarnos también hacia los pobladores, los medioambientalistas o los consumidores, porque entendemos que la pelea que estamos dando no tiene que ver sólo con la calidad de la educación, sino con la calidad de la democracia que tenemos."²⁴¹

If the Chilean Winter failed to solidify these linkages, the movement would seek to build more sustained ties with civil society in the ensuing years. Although students could not

²⁴⁰ Marcela Andrés, "Gabriel Boric: Presidente electo de La Fech: 'El mayor error fue debilitar la alianza con los secundarios,'" *La Tercera*, December 8, 2011.

²⁴¹ Jorge Rojas Hernández, *Sociedad bloqueada: Movimiento estudiantil, desigualdad y despertar de la sociedad chilena* (Santiago: RIL Editores, 2012), 175.

maintain the momentum and mass appeal that they achieved in 2011, the years to come would see a significant broadening of the movement.

From the Streets to the Seats of Congress

Since the 2011 mobilizations, students expanded their efforts to win public office, an indicator of growing recognition for the movement's most emblematic leaders. In 2013, four former leaders won municipal elections: Vallejo, Boric, Jackson, and Karol Cariola, a Communist Party leader who in 2010 had served as the president of Federación de Estudiantes de la Universidad de Concepción. While Vallejo and Cariola belong to the Nueva Mayoría (the center-left coalition led by Bachelet), Boric and Jackson ran as independents. Boric's victory is of particular importance since the Izquierda Autónoma (IA), the university-based political group that he represents, had consistently eschewed participation in partisan politics.²⁴² Even as the IA ran members in congressional elections, it maintained its opposition to the Nueva Mayoría, unlike Vallejo and the Communist Party, who had endorsed Bachelet in the 2013 presidential elections.

While these electoral victories may suggest a promising future for the movement and its demands, students remained critical of these leaders-turned-politicians. Trading in the more radical, autonomous agenda of the movement for the piecemeal reform of establishment politics, this new cohort of politicians has come under fire from former peers for selling out or being co-opted. Vallejo, in particular, received strong criticism for

²⁴² Larrabure and Torchia, "The 2011 Chilean Student Movement and the Struggle for a New Left," 263.

endorsing Bachelet and the Nueva Mayoría in the 2013 elections, a reversal of her previously stated position when she was at the helm of the FECh.

Aracely Moyano, an UPLA student, dismissed these politicians as “opportunists” who “terminan legislando en favor de su partido en vez de a favor del movimiento estudiantil que es lo que tanto prometen.... Se les olvida en verdad por lo que están peleando y con el medio sueldo que tienen, olvidan todo.” Once elected, in her opinion, they lose sight of where they came from and for what they were fighting. “Al final terminan gobernando para los empresarios. No se ataca al neoliberalismo... sino siguen gobernando pa’ ellos.”²⁴³ As she attests, leaders end up governing in the interests of businesses and the political elite rather than the people who helped them get elected.

The participation of radical leaders in establishment politics is not uncommon, however. Tarrow argues that once social movements are no longer disruptive and exciting, they “institutionalize their tactics and attempt to gain concrete benefits for their supporters through negotiation and compromise—a route that often succeeds at the cost of transforming the movement into a party or interest group.”²⁴⁴ Determining whether these appointments advance or stymie the movement is beyond the temporal scope of this project.

If some of these leaders-turned-politicians represented the co-optation of the movement, their ascension to Congress also testifies to the public support and recognition for the movement and its goals. But the multiple perspectives surrounding the institutionalization

²⁴³ Interview, Aracely Moyano, August 8, 2017.

²⁴⁴ Tarrow, *Power in Movement*, 115.

of the most exemplary leaders is important, however, in assessing the results of the Chilean Winter and contextualizing it within social movement theory.

Conclusion

Like the 2006 movement, the Chilean Winter fell short of its key demands. It did, however, win minor concessions, such as lower loan interest rates. Additionally, the resignation of Lavín and the replacement of Bulnes at the end of the year must be considered tangible victories for the movement. More importantly, however, it brought the fight for free, quality education and the end to for-profit universities to the public's attention. As declining approval ratings for Piñera demonstrated, students' mobilizations successfully influenced public opinion.

The election of former leaders to Congress reflects the tremendous success of the movement. But as students have critiqued, this also represents the movement's institutionalization. This was a logical step, however, as the movement began splintering into more radical and moderate factions. Tensions between radicalization and institutionalization would reemerge in the ensuing years, reflecting the diversity that at times strengthened and at other points demobilized the movement.

Conclusion

After more than a decade of mobilizations, it may appear that the student movement has little to show for it. While students have won minor concessions from the state, they are quick to note that these are incomplete victories. For example, while Bachelet granted free education to the lower quintiles, this did not, as students had called for, transform the educational system; education in Chile is still treated as a commodity rather than a universal right. Furthermore, what minor victories the movement has achieved in recent years are likely to be chipped away at during Piñera's presidency.

For students at the heart of the movement, it can be difficult for them to step back and gauge success. Mired in the internal workings of the mobilizations, some may fail to see the relative progress of the movement. Furthermore, the common sense understanding of "success" narrowly defined as policy reform fails to consider other forms of political change brought about by social movements. This perpetuates a zero sum binary between success and failure that leaves little room for alternative visions of change. As voices from within the movement have shown, this self-critical perception can often demobilize a movement; if students do not see tangible victories, they are likely to become exhausted and no longer committed to the cause.

I argue that perhaps more important than policy victories is the movement's ability to reshape public opinion and shift the political agenda, bringing a major issue like free education to the forefront of the nation's attention. In his analysis of social movements outcomes, Tarrow argues that:

“Success” for some movements may consist more of establishing a collective identity than of achieving policy success. It may also consist of placing issues on the political agenda that would not get there without the movement’s efforts. And it may leave organizational and cultural residues around which new supporters can mobilize supporters in the next cycle of contention.²⁴⁵

Per Tarrow’s definition, the student movement has certainly been successful. It has established a collective, if heterogeneous and often fractured, student identity, placed education on the political agenda, and left something for the next generation of students to build on in the form of organizational structures, tactics and demands. And at the very least, the 2006 and 2011 mobilizations contributed to a longstanding, collective memory of the importance of activism to bring about social change.

The ephemerality of each cycle of mobilization also makes it difficult to discern concrete changes or contributions from one generation to the next. Most protest cycles last only a year. Students graduate, exhaustion sets in as the state simultaneously waits out and/or represses the movement, and political actors co-opt the movement. This is partially the nature of social movements, but it is also especially characteristic of student movements. School vacations interrupt mobilizations, as seen in 2011, and the organization of the movement constantly evolves, as students graduate and new ones assume leadership roles. It is near impossible to maintain organizational structures, leadership training, and solidarity networks in an environment so ephemeral by nature.

²⁴⁵ Tarrow, 217.

But even if they are short-lived, these cycles of contention leave tangible residues for the next generation. The Penguin Revolution, which took advantage of negotiation skills honed in the previous year, in turn trained some of the leaders of the 2011 movement. Popularizing the *toma*, *paro*, and mass march, the 2006 mobilization developed the necessary repertoire for an even larger movement five years later. Additionally, the Penguin Revolution set the stage for grander discussions surrounding the precarious state of Chilean education. The Chilean Winter's resonance with the popular classes also provided important lessons for more recent alliances with other social movements. And since the return of democracy, students have developed a more cogent critique of neoliberalism, drawing from their growing alliances to present a vision for the future that consciously seeks to look beyond the horizons of the university

If the student movement is both ephemeral and cyclical, it is also destined to return given a shifting political climate and the emergence of new student leaders. Current students not only have the mobilizations of 2011 and 2006 to draw inspiration from, but also a century-long history of contentious politics: 1983 mobilizations that put Pinochet's dictatorship on notice; the university reform of 1968; the overthrow of Ibáñez's dictatorship in 1931; and the catalytic moment of discontent in the Teatro Municipal in 1906.

But a myopic, nostalgic view of the past cannot provide the necessary lessons for the current student movement. It must also take into account the realities of the present and the challenges of the future. In an increasingly fragmented and socioeconomically stratified society, public university students must continue to step outside the walls of academe, reach out to their private university peers, the popular and working classes, and, at strategic moments, members of the political establishment.

This thesis also documents how over the past century, students have consistently acted as the nation's moral compass, mobilizing around injustice, pressuring the state to act in the interests of the people, and, at times, experiencing persecution for their efforts. In its early years, the FECh forged alliances with the working class, establishing literacy and adult extension courses for laborers and taking to the streets alongside anarcho-syndicalists to demand rights for workers and to speak out against food scarcity, police repression, foreign investment, and inequality. The movement has almost always acted in opposition to the political elite, witnessed by students' efforts to overthrow the Ibáñez and Pinochet dictatorships and more recently, their efforts during the Chilean Winter to undermine Piñera's legitimacy. But students also at times admonished center-left governments, exposing the deeply embedded neoliberal policies of the Concertación years and pushing for reform during Bachelet's presidency. And even those students who supported Allende's democratic socialist revolution agitated for greater change.

In response from pressure to below, state actors over the past century have responded with a mix of concessions and brutal repression and concessions. Dictatorship and democracy alike have used state violence to suppress discontent. And as mobilizations under Bachelet and Piñera have shown, the state has actively attempted to delegitimize and co-opt the movement and its demands. Students have just cause to be skeptical of the state. But students' efforts have not gone unnoticed. Thanks to their persistent call for a more egalitarian society and because of the price they have paid for standing up for their beliefs, students have earned the admiration of many Chileans, which has in turn strengthened the movement.

The Chilean student movement is a prescient example for understanding other social movements across the globe. As the political pendulum swings to the right from the United States to Europe and back to Chile once again, innovative social movements and political coalitions may well prove to be an antidote to deepening privatization, xenophobia, and political corruption. As Chilean students have shown time and time again, state actors do not act independently, but rather in response to contentious acts from below. Chile's vibrant history of student activism, both in the early twentieth century and in recent decades, provides both inspiration and cautionary tales.

Epilogue

“El movimiento de 2011 fue un movimiento derrotado...sus demandas, su intención de expandir el marco de lo posible política en Chile falló,” a disappointed FECh Executive Secretary, Diego López Orellano, related to me in 2017. “Nuestras asambleas empezaban a vaciar, nuestras marchas se transformaron en marchas muy, muy rutinarias, con poca estrategia política, empezaron a avanzar posiciones que no enfrentaban el conflicto.”²⁴⁶ By the end of 2011, months of mobilization had left the movement spent. Marches no longer saw the same numbers, students no longer won over the public and media with their once-innovative tactics, and the movement appeared to have lost direction and focus.

In 2012, the student movement struggled to regain momentum, mounting regular demonstrations, but failing to mobilize to the same degree as it had during the previous year. This period of relative quiescence does not necessarily reflect a failure on the part of the student movement, but rather is typical of the life cycle of most social movements. Valentina Núñez Pascual, a student leader at PUCV, explains why the movement lost its novelty: “Ahora, ¿qué pasa? Nosotros ya pasamos todo ese tiempo, tanto porque había un recambio generacional.” Núñez attributes the movement’s decline to the ebb and flow of students’ university careers; once student leaders graduate, they no longer have the time to commit to these causes, and perhaps it is no longer of such importance to them. At the same time, police learned how to control these demonstrations, and “los medios de comunicación ya estaban acostumbradas a esas cosas. Empezó una etapa de acostumbramiento. Ya no era

²⁴⁶ Interview, Diego López Orellana, July 28, 2017.

llamativo.”²⁴⁷ Once-innovative tactics failed to garner the same attention; the media and general public had become accustomed to the movement’s repertoire.

Tarrow’s writing on the dissipation of social movements corroborates Núñez’s observation: “Disruption is the source of much of the innovation in the repertoire and of the power in movement, but it is unstable and easily hardens into violence or becomes routinized into convention.”²⁴⁸ Novel demonstrations such as flash mobs and kiss-ins quickly became conventionalized and easily managed by police, who “adapt to these changes with innovations of their own.”²⁴⁹

Vicente Briones Soto, a student at PUCV, echoed this sentiment while also noting that such cyclical mobilization was not unusual for a student movement:

Yo creo que en todo caso es normal en cualquier ciclo de movilización estudiantil que nadie tiene la fuerza para seguir tantos años seguidos.... Yo creo que también más que el agotamiento físico también hay un agotamiento más psicológico. En cuento a estar tanto tiempo luchando por algo y ver como no consiguió ningún cambio. Y no fue solamente el año pasado sino todos los años desde 2006 prácticamente hasta ahora luchando por una reforma... que termina en nada.

After a decade of mobilizations with modest victories, the student movement faced both physical and psychological exhaustion. Acknowledging that the movement was not a complete defeat, Briones continued: “Igual creo que es irresponsable decir ‘nada’ porque hay avances. No puedo negar que la gratuidad es un avance y otras materias más, pero yo a lo

²⁴⁷ Interview, Núñez Pascual.

²⁴⁸ Tarrow, *Power in Movement*, 99.

²⁴⁹ Tarrow, 54.

menos no lo consideraría una ganada.”²⁵⁰ Quick to acknowledge victories that the movement had won, he is still critical of the movement’s overall success. While students had won concessions, the movement was at best a partial victory.

Over the next several years, students would continue fighting for free, quality education, galvanizing their peers and the popular sectors, though in much smaller numbers. If the movement post-2011 failed to mobilize the masses in a comparable manner as the Chilean Winter, protests in the following years did, however, incorporate broader sectors of society. In particular, the incorporation of feminist demands through the Ni una menos (“Not One Woman Less”) movement and its recent alignment with No más AFP (Administradoras de Fondos de Pensiones, usually written as No+ AFP), a movement calling for the end to the privatized pension system, forged closer links to the popular classes.

These newfound alliances enabled students to connect with broader grievances against the neoliberal order. “Tratábamos de...vincularlo con un modelo completo que abarca desde la salud, la educación, la pensión de los ancianos,” explained Briones. “En el fondo, darnos cuenta que la educación no solo es una lista más de todo lo que implica el modelo neoliberal y como nosotros como estudiantes desde la educación poder ser la punta lanza, por decirlo así, o nosotros podemos encabezar un movimiento social mucho más amplio.”²⁵¹ While different actors placed distinct demands on the administration, students realized that they shared a common critique of Pinochet’s neoliberal inheritance.

Efforts to incorporate the popular classes into the movement are evident in posters for marches from these years. Long a powerful propaganda tool employed by activists, posters

²⁵⁰ Interview, Briones Soto.

²⁵¹ Briones Soto.

enabled students to visually represent a collective identity and their demands. One such example can be seen in a poster for a march on June 26, 2013 (See Figure 4:1). Organized by the Confech in conjunction with several labor unions, this march called for the renationalization of the copper industry. State control of these industries, students argued, would provide the necessary funds to finance free education. Not only did this demand critique the profiteering transnational control of Chile's resources, but it also harkened back

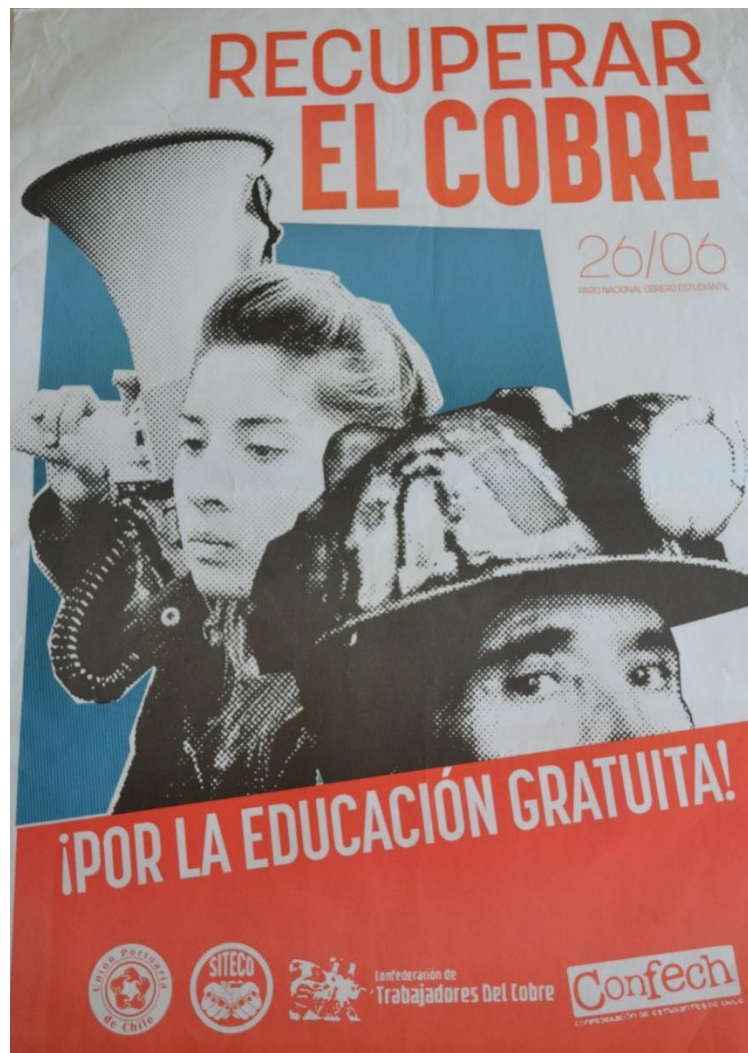


Figure 4:1
Poster for a march on June 26, 2013, organized by the Confech and various labor unions. Image courtesy of the Archive of the FECh.

to Allende's nationalization of the industry. Posters read "recuperar el cobre ¡por la educación gratuita!" in simple block letters. This demand for free education frames images of a student holding a megaphone in the background and a miner in a hardhat in the foreground. Picturing students and workers side by side, this poster visualized the ties between *gratuidad* and copper renationalization.²⁵²

Marches in 2015 also emphasized the intergenerational, familial nature of the movement. A poster for a national march on April 16 reads, "Ni corruptos ni empresarios, que Chile decida su educación" below a cartoon of hands reaching out from suit jackets for a handshake, while passing a rolled-up wad of cash between them (See Figure 4:2). Beneath these hands, a mass of people marches through the streets with raised fists, banners, and flags. Students hold a banner reading "no se vende, se defiende," a frequent chant heard while protesting the privatization of education.²⁵³ At the head of the march are a girl, who is likely a secondary student, an elderly woman with a cane, and a boy holding up a pot, a reference to the frequent *cacerolazos*. A dog sits at the front of the protestors, a common sight since stray dogs are fixtures of Chilean urban space. This diverse crew represents students' visions of a heterogeneous movement with mass appeal. Juxtaposing politicians and businessmen with the masses, this poster illustrates civil society's moralistic impulses bubbling from below prevailing over corruption and profiteering from above.

²⁵² For an excellent analysis on the imagery and messaging in political posters, and, in this case, the use of working class and copper industry imagery see, Mauricio Vico Sánchez, *El afiche político en Chile 1970-2013: Unidad Popular, clandestinidad, transición democrática y movimientos sociales*, (Santiago: Ocho Libros Editores, 2013), 32.

²⁵³ The full chant is "la educación chilena no se vende, se defiende."



Figure 4:2
Poster for a march on April 16, 2015. Image courtesy of
the Archive of the FECh.

Photos from this march show an elderly couple with sandwich-board signs across their chests reading “los abuelos apoyamos a nuestros nietos”²⁵⁴ (See Figure 4:3). These grandparents were later memorialized in posters advertising another march on July 28 (See Figure 4:4), highlighting the multi-generational, familial character of the march. As seen in

²⁵⁴ “Estudiantes marchan para exigir ¡Que Chile decida su educación!” *telesur*, accessed March 23, 2018, <https://www.telesurtv.net/multimedia/Estudiantes-marchan-para-exigir-Que-Chile-decida-su-educacion-20150416-0040.html>.

the 2011 demonstrations, such as the Marcha familiar which drew nearly a million people of all ages, the student movement began to adopt a more inclusive tone and composition. Visually incorporating the broader public into its propaganda, the movement provided a vision that expanded beyond the students and painted the demands of the movement as a common rallying cry.

The past few years have witnessed examples of students' solidarity with other social movements, especially Ni una menos and No+ AFP. The former began in Buenos Aires in June, 2015, in response to the distressing number of femicides.²⁵⁵ The movement quickly spread to other parts of Latin America, where *machismo* and patriarchal violence are equally



Figure 4:3

Grandparents at a march on April 16, 2015.
<https://www.telesurtv.net/multimedia/Estudiantes-antes-marchan-para-exigir-Que-Chile-decida-su-educacion-20150416-0040.html>.

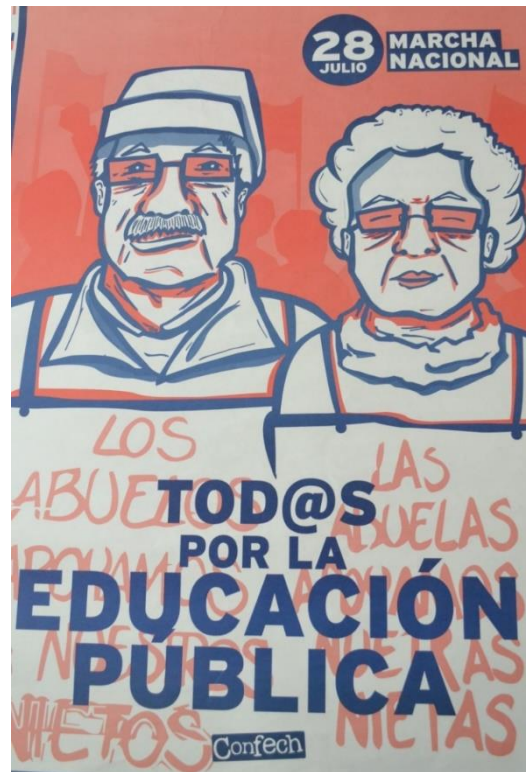


Figure 4:4

Poster for a march on July 28, 2015, inspired by the photograph in 4:3. Image courtesy of the Archive of the FECh.

²⁵⁵ "Ni una menos," accessed April 30, 2018, <http://niunamenos.com.ar/>.

present. In Chile, “Ni una menos” has become a call to arms of the feminist movement. Women and allies of all ages demand political protection in the form of legislation and an end to gender-based violence.²⁵⁶ Feminists also connect patriarchal violence to capitalism and state terrorism which, they insist, is embedded within the neoliberal order. Chants such as “Mujeres contra violencia, mujeres contra el capital, mujeres contra el machismo, contra el terrorismo neoliberal,” highlight the intersectionality of resistance to such structural forms of oppression.

These demands are not confined to Ni una menos demonstrations, however. In student marches, women often carry flags or banners representing various feminist organizations. Chants denouncing patriarchal violence, such as “lo que el pueblo necesita es una educación no sexista,” are ubiquitous. Thanks to the efforts of feminist organizations, the movement has incorporated the demand for “educación no sexista” into its platform, calling for gender parity in schools and impunity for faculty accused of abuse. This movement and the increasing presence of feminist organizations in universities shows that these are not discrete causes; for women within the student movement, putting an end to sexism in the classroom is equally important as demands for free, quality education.²⁵⁷

Student alliances with No+ AFP also show the movement’s expansion beyond the classroom. No+ AFP is an inter-generational movement against the current pension system,

²⁵⁶ Under Bachelet, feminists saw key legislative victories, particularly La ley de identidad de género (The Law of Gender Identity) and the recent approval of a law to de-penalize abortion from three causes. While Bachelet approved these legal measures, they are likely to be rolled back by Piñera’s administration.

²⁵⁷ For more on the demand for “educación no sexista” see, Camila Magnet, “Educación no sexista: ¿Qué hay detrás de la consigna? – Radio JGM,” April 22, 2018, <http://www.radiojgm.cl/educacion-no-sexista-que-hay-detras-de-la-consigna/>; and Red Chilena contra la violencia hacia las mujeres, *Educación No Sexista. Hacia Una Real Transformación* (Andros Impresores, 2016), http://www.nomasviolenciacontramujeres.cl/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/36621_RED-2016-WEB.pdf.

which was enacted in 1980 by Pinochet.²⁵⁸ The fund, which provides abysmally low returns for retirees, has become a catalyst for students and grandparents alike. “El movimiento No+ AFP pegó bastante porque, pucha, todos vamos a ser viejos,”²⁵⁹ one student bluntly explained. This type of inter-generational coalition is reciprocal: student federations play a prominent role in marches organized by No+ AFP, while older generations respond, participating in student demonstrations carrying banners and flags for their own cause.

Students clearly realize that these alliances are necessary to the success of their movement. According to Briones, the 2011 movement was fruitful in large part because “pudimos llegar a las personas fuera del mundo estudiantil.... El movimiento estudiantil se pudo unir junto otros movimientos sociales,” especially indigenous and environmental mobilizations in southern Chile. Now, he sees a similar opportunity with No+ AFP: “Tenemos una oportunidad para poder traspasar esa barrera y llegar al mundo social.” Several times in his interview, he proposed “movimiento social por la educación,” instead of simply the “student movement.”²⁶⁰ By reframing the mobilizations as a *social* rather than *student* movement, leaders deliberately sought to expand the scope of the movement.

Both current and former students were optimistic about No+ AFP. As Ibarra said: “Yo creo que el movimiento No más AFP es como el segundo movimiento estudiantil 2011.... Yo creo que, sí es un movimiento que vino para quedarse, y que además nos incumbe todos, porque en el fondo todos estamos dentro de este sistema, un sistema que nació en dictadura y

²⁵⁸ For more information on No+ AFP see, “No Más AFP,” accessed March 24, 2018, <http://www.nomasafp.cl/inicio/>; and “¿Qué son las AFP y por qué las quieren cambiar en Chile?,” *CNN Español*, September 4, 2017, <http://cnnespanol.cnn.com/2017/09/04/que-son-las-afp-y-por-que-las-quieren-cambiar-en-chile/>.

²⁵⁹ Interview, Nuñez Pascual.

²⁶⁰ Interview, Briones Soto.

que ya se comprobó de que fue un fracaso.”²⁶¹ Like the current educational system, the pension fund also originated during the dictatorship, making their battles one and the same.

As another student eloquently put it:

[E]s súper necesario que todos estos movimientos sociales se junten porque al final lo que se busca es el derrocamiento del neoliberalismo y todos apuntan a lo mismo, pero desde distintas áreas. Desde la área estudiantil, desde la área de los trabajadores, desde la gente se atiende en los hospitales públicos, desde las mujeres que somos violentadas a diario.²⁶²

The alliance then between the student movement and No+ AFP strengthens the respective movements and provides a unified critique of the neoliberal order.

The past year has been an important turning point for the student movement and Chilean politics more generally. In November, journalist Beatriz Sánchez came within two points of entering the runoff election against the eventual victor, Piñera, who was running for a second term. Sánchez ran as an independent politician representing the Frente Amplio, a coalition of leftist political groups formed by politicians and former student leaders such as Boric, Jackson, and Jorge Sharp.²⁶³ Her surprising showing was heralded as a victory for the new movement. During the campaign biased polling and unfavorable press predicted that Sánchez would fare poorly, but she won 20.3% of the popular vote, compared to Piñera’s 36.6%. Although center-left Alejandro Guillier of the Nueva Mayoría would advance to the runoff with Piñera before eventually losing to the former president, the unanticipated

²⁶¹ Interview, Ibarra Sánchez.

²⁶² Interview, Moyano.

²⁶³ In 2016, Sharp was elected the first independent mayor of Valparaíso, the results of grassroots efforts across the city.

groundswell for Sánchez shook the mainstream media and the political establishment. This augurs well for the Frente Amplio's political future. Moreover, the nascent coalition obtained its first seat in the Senate with the election of Juan Ignacio Latorre and it also elected several deputies to the lower chamber.²⁶⁴

Although many students still refuse to participate in mainstream politics, elements of the movement have become closely aligned with the Frente Amplio. In my interviews, several students expressed cautious optimism about the electoral results. Briones was a strong supporter of the Frente Amplio and acknowledged that political representation was a necessary complement to student activism. “Más allá de lo que nosotros podemos desempeñar como estudiantes, llegamos a la conclusión que estos cambios deben ser acompañados tanto por un lado el poder político mediante las elecciones y por otro lado una articulación social.”²⁶⁵ From his perspective, change must come from both from grassroots organizing and the ballot box.

Not all students, of course, supported the Frente Amplio or believe in the electoral path to bring about political change. Aracely Moyano, who attends the traditionally more leftist UPLA, told me this summer that she planned to abstain in the past election.²⁶⁶ “La Jota [Juventud Comunista] y el Frente Amplio, lo que proponen es reformas y no atacar directamente al neoliberalismo en sí, no atacar directamente al estado, sino que hacer reformas,”²⁶⁷ she noted. Critiques that the Frente Amplio would settle for piecemeal reforms

²⁶⁴ For an interview with Senator Latorre and greater analysis on the emergence of the Frente Amplio see, Nicholas Allen, “A Majority in the Making: An Interview with Juan Ignacio Latorre,” *Jacobin*, December 17, 2017, <https://www.jacobinmag.com/2017/12/chile-left-frente-amplio-latorre-podemos>.

²⁶⁵ Interview, Briones Soto.

²⁶⁶ She was not alone in her abstention—less than 50% of the voting populace participated, Chile's lowest turnout for a presidential election.

²⁶⁷ Interview, Moyano.

and that it would not launch a frontal attack against systemic neoliberalism were commonplace among more radical students that I encountered.

Ibarra was even more skeptical about the Frente Amplio. Like Moyano, she was critical of its reformist nature, saying that its platform, “[n]o hacía ninguna crítica del modelo. Lo único que hacía era maquillar.” She went even further, suggesting that the Frente Amplio was “a danger” to the student movement because of its ability to co-opt social movements and incorporate them within a political project “que en el fondo lo único que van a ser va a ser perpetuar este modelo y van a acabar con todo tipo de movimiento social que existe.” Describing the Frente Amplio as the “mal menor,”²⁶⁸ or the lesser of the evils, Ibarra’s critique reflects the perspective of many *independentistas* who stand further to the left of the Frente Amplio.

These contrasting opinions are characteristic of the movement’s heterogeneous character. While one political party will never satisfy the entirety of the student population, I am optimistic about the Frente Amplio’s political future. One year after its founding, the coalition already represents a formidable challenge to the Nueva Mayoría’s center-left hegemony and the newly elected conservative administration. As a student cautiously commented several months before the election, the Frente Amplio “[e]s un avance, pero yo no sé se vaya a salir electo. Es un proyecto en pañales, está recién empezado.”²⁶⁹

But the momentum generated by the Frente Amplio’s electoral campaign will not suffice under a Piñera presidency. Although the movement was relatively quiet during the election cycle, students that I spoke with predict that it will reemerge in full force in the

²⁶⁸ Interview, Ibarra Sánchez.

²⁶⁹ Interview, Nuñez Pascual.

coming years. As Briones expressed last August: “Es difícil que haya una movilización este año...porque es un año electoral. Y por lo que hemos visto como ha avanzado el movimiento estudiantil desde 2011 hasta ahora, siempre es como cíclico.... Y ahora estamos en un período más de reestructuración.” 2017 saw minimal mobilizations as energy and national attention were redirected towards the presidential election. Like many of his peers, Briones was pessimistic about the upcoming election and expected a victory for Piñera. While he expressed fear that Piñera “cortaría la mayoría de los pocos cambios que hemos logrado en materia educación,” he also suggested that his election would trigger the return of mass protests. “Entonces nos hace pensar que los próximo cuatro años en caso de que salga él sean años movilizadores, años en que vuelvan las protestas grandes, en que se agudice...las movilizaciones.”²⁷⁰

Speaking even further to the left of Briones, Moyano shared the same sentiment: “Se va a empezar el movimiento según yo, lo que creo, lo que espero, como que empieza a tomar fuerza de nuevo. Como que empieza a revivir, después de este año, que fue bastante muerto.”²⁷¹ Both students acknowledged that the past year was “quite dead,” but they viewed the shift to the right as a new opportunity to mobilize. As recent marches have already shown, it is likely that the movement will remobilize in the coming years, since many of the small victories achieved during Bachelet’s presidency are in jeopardy.

Not only is free education at risk; legal protections for women and sexual minorities hard won by *Ni una menos* are also under threat. Moreover, continued efforts to privatize the already precarious pension fund and health system are a cause for concern. Mapuche

²⁷⁰ Interview, Briones Soto.

²⁷¹ Interview, Moyano.

communities, who historically have been marginalized by the state, will likely be further disenfranchised if the Piñera administration, as expected, promotes increased transnational development on their lands. Increased resource extraction coupled with a likely overhaul of environmental protections will jeopardize Chile's natural beauty and those whose livelihoods depend upon it. Recent racist incidents against black immigrants in Santiago mimic the recent global surge of populist nationalism and xenophobia. As students had feared, prospects are grim for the next four years. With so much at stake, it is hard to imagine that the movement will remain dormant for long.

Fortunately, many of the pieces are in place for students to remobilize. As Tarrow argues, "people engage in contentious politics when patterns of political opportunities and constraints change, and then by strategically employing a repertoire of collective action, creating new opportunities, which are used by others in widening cycles of contention."²⁷² Murmurs of discontent within the student movement have already escalated into massive mobilizations, drawing the largest crowds since 2016.²⁷³ If the movement can develop a new repertoire of innovative tactics and continue to connect with other movements and civil society at large, it can mount a formidable offensive to Piñera's second term.

²⁷² Tarrow, *Power in Movement*, 28–29.

²⁷³ Sandra Quevedo, "Los jóvenes aseguran que 'no cometerán los mismos errores de los que ahora están en el Congreso': Tras su primera marcha, estudiantes advierten que Gobierno deberá enfrentar más protestas," *El Mercurio*, April 20, 2018.

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